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## THE DRAMA OF MADAGASCAR



*BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

A THOUSAND YEARS OF RUSSIAN HISTORY

SOME RUSSIAN HEROES, SAINTS AND SINNERS

THE FALSE DMITRI

REAL RUSSIANS

ODD PATTERNS IN THE WEAVING

LES HEROS DU SAHARA

*Crowned by the Académie Française*

*Prix Gaudy (Medal) of the Soc. de Géogr. Com. de Paris*

LYAUTEY OF MOROCCO

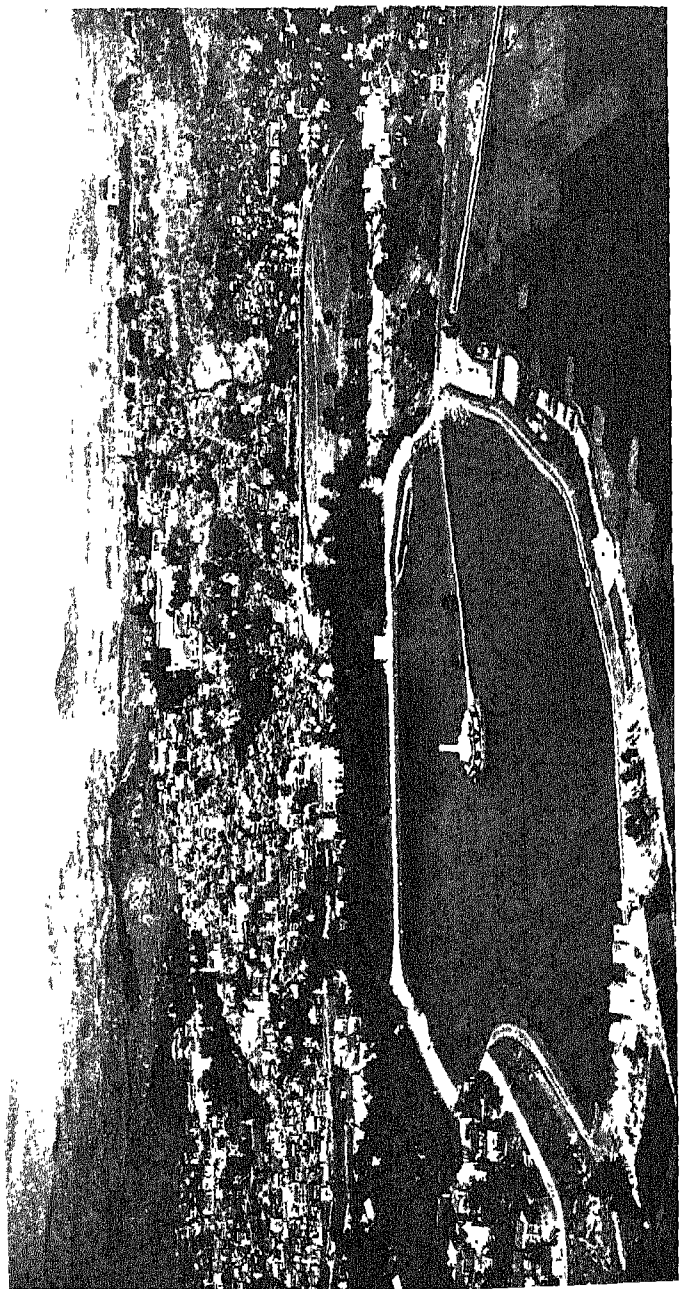
L'EUROPE ET MADAGASCAR

*Crowned by the Académie Française*

*Prix Armand Rousseau (Medal) of the Société de Géographie*

LYAUTEY DU MAROC





TANANARIVE AS IT IS TO-DAY

# THE DRAMA OF MADAGASCAR

*by*

SONIA E. HOWE

*Officier d'Académie*

*Foreword by*

THE RT. HON. LORD LUGARD

G.C.M.G., D.S.O., C.B.



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## FOREWORD

THE fact that Maréchal Lyautey had promised to write a preface to the French edition of this book is sufficient testimony to its value. His long and intimate association with the hero of this story, for whom he cherished an unbounded admiration, and whose principles he applied with such great success in Morocco, would have lent an altogether unique interest to his prologue.

The story of European rivalry in this beautiful island dates back to the visits of Portuguese, French, Dutch, and British traders to the Indies some three centuries ago. The authoress—Russian by birth—cannot be accused of racial prejudice in her account of the long struggle between French and British influence. At last in 1890 the claim of France for predominance was recognized by Great Britain, and her prestige, which had suffered by the loss of Mauritius and Bourbon in 1810, was once more restored in the island. Henceforth the rivalry was confined to the mission sphere. In 1889 the French Government decided to declare a protectorate over the country, and the only result of the resistance of the Queen and her councillors was to convert the Protectorate into a French colony.

Though the story thus far lacks nothing in sustained interest, it is with the entry of General Gallieni upon the scene that it culminates. He arrived to find the whole island in a state of chaos. The central native authority, weakened by defeat, was no longer able to maintain even the pretence of law and order. The home Government was ready to comply with almost any demand for troops, money, and autocratic powers from the man who could establish French rule.

The General's first task was to restore order, for which purpose he had 12,000 reliable troops, including 2,000 Europeans. His declared policy was to rule through the Queen and local chiefs, and in this he was enthusiastically supported by his devoted lieutenant, Lyautey. Finding, however, that the Queen was the secret centre of anti-French intrigue, he decided

to depose and banish her, and two of her principal abettors were executed.

What was the secret of his success, and what were the methods by which he won the devotion of his subordinates, and the trust of the people over whom he ruled? He looked to his staff, military as well as civil, each in his own sphere, to help in the work of pacification, and he advised and guided them by a stream of explanatory decrees. Slaves, should they so desire, might remain as unpaid servants with their masters—tribesmen would choose their own local chiefs. The courts would retain what was best in native custom. For the ill-nourished, and disease-infected peasantry, dispensaries would be opened in every village. There would be complete tolerance in religion, but religious leaders must refrain from politics; existing mission hospitals, dispensaries, and schools were encouraged, and a fair system of taxes—which were readily paid—was instituted.

The fact that 93 per cent of the commerce was, we are told, in foreign hands, and 90 per cent of the island was not even explored, while almost all the subordinate officials trained in mission schools spoke English instead of French, added greatly to the initial difficulties of the task—difficulties which were, however, surmounted in an astonishingly short time.

It is specially interesting to note that much of the same methods had been adopted a year or two previously by the British in Uganda, and systematized a little later in Nigeria, but in spite of the proved success of the principles inaugurated by Gallieni in Madagascar, they were not accepted as the policy of France elsewhere in Africa.

LUGARD

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

### *An Explanation*

It may be perhaps as well to state from the outset that my book is neither a history of the island of Madagascar and its peoples, nor that of a French colony. About these subjects literally thousands of books have been written in England and France.

I have approached Madagascar from a totally different point of view, namely, from that of the role this island has played in history. Experts on Madagascar have stated, since the French edition<sup>1</sup> of this book has come out, in November 1936, that it is unique in its kind because its theme is the interrelation between Europe and Madagascar. I show English and French shuttles running to and fro, both weaving in the course of time a pattern which stands out vividly against the wonderful natural background that the great island of Madagascar presents.

It would be an easy, although a rather costly undertaking to use the narrative of my book as the subject of a magnificent pageant.

Kings of Portugal, England and France, in pomp and show, would pass by, accompanied by their ministers and courtiers; even Peter the Great and Charles XII of Sweden would appear. There would be famous navigators with their mariners, great merchant princes, adventurers, pirates, gallant gentlemen, sturdy citizens of lowly birth, but worthy representatives of their respective countries. Another procession could show Hova rulers and their subjects as they were before European articles of manufacture were added to age-old barbarism.

I have been to Madagascar, and therefore know the background of the tapestry, and the setting of the pageant.

For me, however, that great island has become the scene of

<sup>1</sup> By request of my English publishers I have abridged Part I by many thousand words. Will reviewers and readers kindly take this fact into consideration? The French edition contains the original text in its entirety.—S. E. H.



a drama, enacted in the course of four centuries by Europeans belonging to different nations; during the nineteenth century also by Hova Kings, Queens and Prime Ministers.

There is no doubt that Madagascar owes its economic and historical interest solely to its geographical situation. A few hundred miles farther south or east would have completely altered its destiny. But because it lay on the route to India it was of vital importance to the mariners of all nations, who found there, in abundance, the refreshment so necessary in days gone by, when it took many weary months to reach the countries which lay beyond the Cape of Good Hope.

Before the Suez Canal was opened Madagascar was also of very real strategic importance, fully realized by England and France.

This great island might have been an English colony since the days of Charles I. The reason why this is not the case will be found in the first part of my book, which tells of unfulfilled expectations and of disappointed hopes.

It was not until 1810, when England took possession of the Ile de France, that Madagascar assumed for her also the economic importance it had had for the French ever since the days when the islands of Mauritius and Bourbon came to be inhabited by colonists from France.

By the fact that in 1814 the Ile de France became a British colony for good, a new situation was created, bound to lead to rivalry and even to diplomatic complications. At first, this rivalry existed merely between the respective governors of the colonies of Bourbon and Mauritius (Ile de France); but later between British and French subjects in Madagascar whose patriotism, religious zeal, and frequently also lack of discretion, created political difficulties which, in many instances might have been avoided.

Notwithstanding, being one and all good men and true, it was apparently impossible for them to give each other their due. Instead, they suspected their rivals of 'nefarious dealings' and of 'sinister designs', being unable to reckon with the fundamental difference of policy pursued in Madagascar by their respective governments.

Merely to exercise political influence over the chief ruler of that island was sufficient for England, which held the ports of Mauritius. Influence alone, however, could not satisfy

France, who had to find in Madagascar substitutes for her lost maritime facilities.<sup>1</sup> While she tried to recover her former territorial rights on the east coast of that island, British influence became predominant in the interior. The shrewd ruler of the Hovas welcomed this influence, as it brought civilization to his people, and to himself increase in prestige and fortune.

The material for my book I have collected from first-hand sources; some as yet never before published. From the political correspondence in the archives of the British and French Foreign and Colonial Offices I gained insight into those diplomatic difficulties which the question of Madagascar has presented to both governments at different times.

Madagascar is repeatedly mentioned on the closely printed pages of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century accounts of voyages to the East, published in Portugal, Holland, France, and England. In studying these books I realized what fantastic hopes had been cherished with regard to that island's natural resources and possibilities for colonization. Its importance for certain groups of Englishmen in the seventeenth century I discovered in the Court Minutes of the East India Company. What Madagascar meant to Frenchmen, I learnt from letters and memoranda preserved in the Archives of the Colonial Office in Paris.

So alive and vibrating with enthusiasm and anguish are those documents that one feels the temperament of the writers. The same holds good with regard to letters and reports of the early French and English missionaries.

What had then been considered impracticable schemes of visionaries are now, in many instances, the deliberate policy of the responsible men on the spot. Slowly but surely the great island is being developed and its natural riches exploited; and the best our civilization has to offer is put within reach of the inhabitants.

The work is carried on in peace and harmony. The waves of religious antagonism have quieted down, and British missionaries freely admit that the island is well administered.

During my visit to Madagascar I was able to see fulfilled many of the hopes so ardently yet so vainly cherished in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

<sup>1</sup> The Ile de Bourbon has no natural harbour

While studying the rich and often as yet unused material so generously put at my disposal I had but one desire, and that was to understand both points of view—the Protestant and the Catholic, the French and the English. Because I belong by birth to neither of these two nations, but love and understand both, I approached the subject of Madagascar without prejudice. I did it as a lover of history and of noble personalities, which transcend creed and nationality. I hope that, incidentally, my presentation of persons and events in Madagascar, and their interrelations with Europe, will lead to a more just appreciation of men and motives, hitherto often regarded, and usually written about, in France and in England, from a purely national and sectarian point of view.

It is more than ten years since I began my studies of French colonial history, as it unfolded itself in the Sahara, Indo-China, Morocco, the Soudan, and in Madagascar.

My interest had been aroused by coming across just that kind of man all Englishmen admire—where character is the chief agent. I began to study their lives<sup>1</sup>—then to write about them. What struck me in particular was a certain characteristic common to the best of French colonial administrators, military as well as civilian, namely the deliberate aim to win the natives by a ‘conquest of hearts’.

I have come across these three words repeatedly on the leaves of forgotten manuscripts, and just as often on the printed pages of modern books dealing with colonial questions. I have heard that same expression from the lips of present-day officials, but what is more, I have been told it by natives—a spontaneous testimony.

In my search for documentation I have been assisted most kindly in a variety of ways by many persons, who put their knowledge and experience, their books and manuscripts, at my disposal.

I would like here to express my thanks to them all, whether savants, military or colonial administrators, librarians, officials of various Protestant and Roman Catholic missionary societies, members of Maréchal Gallieni’s family, etc., etc.

<sup>1</sup> Le Père de Foucauld and General Lapeyrière (Les Héros du Sahara); Lyautey of Morocco; Gallieni of Madagascar, etc., etc.

I owe, however, a very special debt of gratitude to the following gentlemen for their valuable, and frequently painstaking, efforts to help me to attain my object:

*M. Cayla*, Governor-General of Madagascar, whose kindness, during my visit to Imerina, opened every door, and who is doing his utmost to make Madagascar an island of realized hopes; *Mr. David Chamberlain*, Librarian of the London Missionary Society, who enabled me to study the earliest correspondence concerning Madagascar, which shed new light on the personality and activity of Sir Robert Farquhar, first British Governor of Mauritius, as also on that of the first missionaries to proceed to Madagascar; *General Fillonneau*, who, in the course of translating my English text into French, discussed it with me; *Sir Stephen Gaselee*, Librarian of the Foreign Office who secured for me the permission to read the political correspondence up to the year 1890; *M. Georges Goyau*, of the Académie Française, who put me into touch with the earliest records of the Roman Catholic missions in Madagascar; *M. G. Grandidier*, General Secretary of the Geographical Society of Paris, who permitted me to consult his very rich and valuable collection of books; *General Hellot*, staff officer to General Gallieni in Madagascar, who wrote the reports of those stirring days when his chief created order out of chaos; *M. Hertauld*, of the Order of the Lazarists, who permitted me to study the correspondence of the founder of that Order, with the earliest missionaries in Madagascar, in the seventeenth century;<sup>1</sup> *Admiral Lacaze*, for discussing with me the most complicated incidents in Anglo-French relations, in which he had taken part as a young naval officer, and for kindly writing the preface to the French edition of this book; *M. Alfred Martineau*, Professor of colonial history at the Collège de France; *Mr W. T. Ottewil*, Keeper of the Records of the India Office, in which I made exceptionally interesting finds; *M. Paul Roussier*, Keeper of the Records of the French Colonial Office, without whose helpfulness and encouragement I could not have achieved what I have been enabled to do; *Major Hanns Vischer*, of the Colonial Office, who has sponsored my book for Lord Lugard.

I am greatly obliged to this most distinguished of living

<sup>1</sup> *L'Europe et Madagascar*, published November 1936.

British colonial administrators for writing the foreword to this book. He has done it gladly, because, so he wrote to me, Maréchal Lyautey was his friend, and also because he considered Maréchal Gallieni one of the greatest of French colonial administrators.

SONIA E. HOWE

PARIS

*5th May 1937*

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### AN ISLAND OF DISAPPOINTED HOPES

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TANANARIVE AS IT IS TO-DAY

(*By courtesy of the Governor-General of Madagascar*)

*Frontispiece*

SAINTE MARIE IN 1829

(*By courtesy of M. Paul Roussier*)

*Facing page 158*

## MAPS

MADAGASCAR AND THE INDIAN OCEAN

THE ISLAND OF MADAGASCAR

} *at end*





PART I  
THE ISLAND OF DISAPPOINTED HOPES



## *Chapter I*

### AN ISLAND ON THE ROUTE TO INDIA

MADAGASCAR, that great island on the route to India, was by its geographical position destined to play an important role in the lives of the mariners of many nations, whose lot it was to sail beyond the Cape of Good Hope; originally, merely in quest of spices, afterwards for commerce and conquest.

To find the land whence pepper, cloves, and nutmegs came had been the reason why, for nigh on seventy-five years, Portuguese navigators had braved the terrible perils of the Atlantic Ocean. Therefore, when in 1487 one of these captains, Bartholomeo Diaz, had at last doubled the southern part of Africa, King John II's heart was filled with joy. He foresaw the probability of this feat leading to the discovery so ardently desired.

In hopeful anticipation of success, he changed the name of Gabo Tormentosa, which its discoverer had given to the great promontory in those tempest-swept regions, to that of Buona Speranza.

Nor was his hope doomed to failure, although King John II did not live to see its fulfilment. His successor, King Emmanuel, entered into this great heritage.

It was an epoch-making event when in 1499 Vasco da Gama returned from his successful journey to India, bringing a letter to his sovereign from the ruler of Calicut, in which the writer offered to the King of Portugal cinnamon, cloves, ginger, pepper, and precious stones, in exchange for gold, silver, corals, and scarlet cloth.

The immediate consequence of this journey was that the maritime policy of Portugal became centred upon capturing the lucrative spice trade, hitherto in the hands of the Venetians.

A first fleet of thirteen vessels, commanded by Pedro Alvarez Cabral, left Lisbon for India six months after Vasco da Gama's return. Once again the terrible tempests which the navigators

encountered near the Cape justified its original name. But even before it had been reached, one of the ships had been separated from the rest by a violent storm. The captain failed to keep as close to the coast as was the custom of Portuguese navigators in unknown waters. Sailing in the open seas, he sighted a shore which he reckoned ought to be Mozambique. It was only when he discovered that this land ended that he realized having sailed along what was an island. A haven was found and a boat lowered; the water was found to be good and abounding in fish; but not a native was seen on the shore.

The Portuguese used to take convicts with them on their voyages of discovery, men condemned to banishment, and whenever new shores had to be explored, one or more of these Degradados were sent out to reconnoitre. Diego Dias did so in this instance, and his messenger, after penetrating into the thicket, discovered a few huts and some absolutely naked natives. After he had made himself understood by signs, they followed him on board, bringing fowls and fruit to barter for iron implements, beads, and mirrors.

If it had not been for the fact that several of his sailors had died of fever, the captain would have gladly prolonged his stay in a country which seemed to him pleasant; but he hoisted sail and, steering west, landed north of Malindi, on the east coast of Africa.

The island he had thus accidentally discovered in 1500, Diego Dias named San Lorenzo, after the saint whose feast fell on August 10th, the day he had landed on its shores.

When the King received news of the discovery of an island off the east coast of Africa, so far south, he concluded that it must be that of Madasgacar, about which he had read in Marco Polo's *Voyages*. However, the famous Venetian traveller had not been there himself, for otherwise he would not have stated either that Madagascar contained more elephants than any other country, or that the inhabitants lived solely on the flesh of camels. Believing everything his Arab informants told him, Marco Polo had ascribed to an island what really applied to the kingdom of Mogdicho in East Africa, a little north of the Equator. Mispronouncing and misspelling the name Mogdicho, he had coined the word

Madagascar,<sup>1</sup> and as Madagascar the island has been known ever since.

In 1506 the King sent Tristan da Cunha, as Viceroy, to India, who, accompanied by d'Albuquerque, made a vain attempt to visit Madagascar, which he hoped might prove a second India, only easier to conquer, because of the apparently friendly natives. In course of time many Portuguese ships, going to or from India, passed south-east of Madagascar, because it was a safer route than that through the Canal of Mozambique. The King therefore decided to build a fort on the southern point, where ships might find refreshment. Seventy men were sent there, accompanied by several priests, to found a colony. The fort was built, but the natives meant to get rid of the foreigners, as well as to secure their merchandise. At a feast, to which they invited the Europeans, all but five of them were massacred. The survivors, having escaped to the fort, thanks to their slaves, remained there for many years until rescued by a ship on her way to India.

In 1528 Nuna da Cunha intended to continue the exploration of Madagascar, which his father had been the first to attempt. However, Fate was against him, for some of his ships, his own included, were wrecked on the west coast. After having managed to rescue the treasure chest, he set fire to his ship, watching it being burnt down to the water's level, and then sailed to India.

As the flames which consumed the flagship flared up high, but only to die down, so did also the high hopes which the Portuguese had set on Madagascar. All idea of conquering that island was given up for good.

A year later some French captains reached Madagascar, eager to discover 'what lay beyond the other side of Asia'. The brothers Jean and Raoul Parmentier had been entrusted by the great shipping king of Dieppe, Jean Ango, with two ships to undertake this quest.

On Easter Day 1529, *La Pensée* and *Le Sacre* had left Dieppe for the ends of the earth.<sup>2</sup>

Whether Jean Parmentier had intended landing at

<sup>1</sup> *Collections et ouvrages anciens concernant Madagascar*, A. and G. Grandidier, vol. i. Paris, 1903-12.

<sup>2</sup> *Le Discours de la Navigation de Jean Parmentier*. Recueil de Voyages et de documents, Publié par M. Ch. Scheffer. Paris, 1883.

Madagascar is not known, but as he had a Portuguese pilot on board, this possibility is not excluded.

The island was sighted in the evening, and the French mariners watched great fires burning on the land. The next morning two boats were sent to the shore. A number of natives, who approached in hollowed-out tree trunks, were taken on board, given presents, and sent back. The captains did not want their men to land, for fear of losing them. However, two of the more experienced mariners, of whom one was named Jack the Scotsman, asked for permission to go on shore, which was granted.

The natives seemed friendly, several coming to the ships, bringing fruit, which was greatly appreciated, especially a kind of melon. As neither fresh water nor wood for fuel was within easy reach, the ships sailed further north-east. A likely landing-place having been sighted, two boats were sent to the shore, laden with some merchandisc for barter. Orders, however, were given to the sailors not to expose themselves to any risks, but once the reconnoitring had been accomplished, to return quickly to the ships.

Invited to a meal by the natives, their guests had enjoyed the food offered, and the Malagasy urged them by signs to follow them where ginger and silver were to be found. Remembering how friendly every one had been the previous day, several of the Frenchmen decided to accept the invitation. But hardly had they gone when their comrades, who were filling barrels with water, heard the Scotsman cry out as in anguish, and then they saw the others running towards them, pursued by the savages. Great sorrow reigned on board when the survivors returned to the ships. As the men brought specimens of grains which seemed to be like pepper, and sand which looked like tiny silver and gold scales, the captains decided to go on shore the next day to judge for themselves, and to bury their dead. This done, and having well examined the sand of the estuary of the river, which seemed all silvery, they assumed that a silver mine had been discovered. After careful deliberation, however, it was not considered to be sufficient in quantity to make the expenditure of time and cost worth while.

While this deliberation was going on, some natives, whirling their assegais, appeared on the ridge of the hill. The shots

fired from the arquebus did not seem at all to impress the savages, who evidently did not know fire-arms and, boldly advancing, ran right to the shore, throwing their darts into the boats at the fleeing Frenchmen. However, when one of the natives, hit by a shot, fell all of a heap, the others drew back.

When more bands of savages appeared, it was decided, by the captains and the masters to leave this place with the next good wind. Fortunately, this was the case on the morrow. Having escaped danger from man, the mariners now found themselves in danger from hidden rocks. Following carefully the small boat sounding the passage, several islands, hardly above sea-level, and covered with vegetation, were passed. To each of them a name was given, while the whole group was called Les Isles de Crainte, on account of the fear they caused. The name of Cap de Trahison was given to the place where their comrades had been treacherously murdered.

Soon after the ships were becalmed. Troubled by this additional annoyance, they entered this sea on the chart as La Mer sans Raison, for 'there seemed to be no sense in it all'.

Truly, Madagascar and its environment made no pleasant impression; but the navigators were quite ready to believe that the island might contain riches worth coming for another time. This time the lands furthest east were their goal.

The first contact between Dieppe and Madagascar had thus decidedly not been a success, for, apart from adding the tragic names of 'treachery' and of 'fear' to cape and group of islands, nothing had been achieved.

In 1547, fourteen years later, the most famous captain-pilot of King Francis I, Jean Fontenay,<sup>1</sup> touched at Madagascar on his way to India. In his epoch-making *Cosmographie*<sup>2</sup> the situation of Madagascar is for the first time mentioned in terms of longitude and latitude, and distances between certain points are given in exact measurements. The text dealing with this island is almost entirely technical, except for two concise statements concerning people and land. Of the inhabitants he writes that they are bad, not wishing to trade with any one, and he mentions the massacre of the Portuguese

<sup>1</sup> *Les Navigations françaises*, Pierre Mangry. Paris 1867.

<sup>2</sup> *La Cosmographie avec l'Espère et Regime du Soleil et du Nord*, par Jean Fonteneau dit Alfonse de Saintonge Capitaine-Pilote de François I<sup>re</sup>, publiée et annotée par Georges Musset. Paris, 1894, p. 345.



settlers as the reason for the King of Portugal having given up all thought of Madagascar. As to the land, that is good, and much white ginger, good sugar, precious stones, and gold dust are to be found. What seems to have impressed Jean Fontenay most is 'the dangerous nature of the west coast, being full of small islands, rocks, and reefs'.

Fifty years later it was the turn for some Englishmen to catch a sight of Madagascar, when certain merchants of the city of London, encouraged by the success of Sir Francis Drake's voyage around the world, decided to establish direct trade with India by the sea route.

The experiences of this first English fleet in the regions of the Cape of Good Hope, were in no manner more pleasant than those of the Portuguese. The *Edward Bonaventure* had to experience every terror imaginable; storm-tossed, lightning-struck, her crew temporarily blinded, when not killed, her mast was split from top to bottom, and the iron spikes melted by the heat. Her captain, James Lancaster, and his mariners, thanked God when, a few days later, Madagascar was sighted—bathed in moonlight. It was, however, impossible to land owing to the heavy seas.

Meanwhile, in Holland, the same spirit of commercial enterprise had awakened with regard to direct trade with the East Indies.

The psychological moment for starting on such an adventure came with the arrival in Amsterdam of one Cornelius van Houtman, who had lived for many years in Portugal, first as soldier, then as merchant, and who had been several times to the East Indies with the Portuguese.

Nine merchants founded a company, fitted out four ships in 1595, and appointed Houtman as Commercial Director of the fleet. The experience of this first expedition, of which Houtman was captain, and which took over two years to accomplish, has been graphically and in detail described by a volunteer, who went as supercargo.<sup>1</sup> The red thread which runs through the narrative is the intense sufferings of the seamen from

<sup>1</sup> Lodewijkst Willem (G.M.A.W.L.), *Le Premier Livre de l'Histoire de la Navigation aux Indes Orientales par les Hollandais*. Amsterdam, 1598.

scurvy, and therefore it was with great joy that the island of Madagascar was sighted. Before the Bay of St. Augustine was reached, many of the seamen had died and had been buried on an island, to which place the name of 'the Dutchman's Cemetery' was given.

The immediate result of Houtman's expedition was the creation of a new company, which, nine months later, in 1598, sent out a fleet of eight vessels under the command of Jacob Cornelius van Neck. Madagascar was visited for refreshment, as also the island of Cerné, which the admiral called Mauritius, in honour of the Stadtholder of the Netherlands, Maurice of Nassau.

At the same time as this fleet was sailing the Eastern seas, a Flemish merchant prince, Balthezar de Moucheron of Vere, sent Cornelius van Houtman and his brother as captains of the *Lion* and the *Lioness* to the East Indies, taking with them as pilot John Davis, England's greatest Antarctic explorer of those days.

Meanwhile, in London, the price of pepper had risen from four shillings to six shillings, because the Dutch were profiting by England's inability to import this precious spice direct from Lisbon, owing to being at war with Spain. It was this dependence upon the Dutch middleman which was the decisive factor for certain merchants in the next move for securing the trade with India and with the Spice Islands. This time it was not to be a small private venture, but an enterprise sanctioned officially by the Crown, to be undertaken under the auspices of a new association.

According to its charter, the company had been granted licence to send annually 'six good ships and six pinnaces well-furnished for their defence with ordnance and other munitions for their defence and five hundred mariners, Englishmen, unless required by the Crown to join the navy in case of war'. Yet in spite of this right, only three ships and a smaller one were sent out. As seems only natural, Captain James Lancaster was chosen as admiral and John Davis, just back from his voyage with the Dutch to the East Indies, was appointed major-pilot.

The charter had been signed on 31st December, and early in February 1600 the little fleet sailed eastward ho!

Full of hope and courage, the fleet doubled the Cape, but when nearing Madagascar all attempts at landing had to be given up, winds and waves rendering it impossible. Failing to find the island of Mauritius, and having battled for two weeks against contrary winds, Captain Lancaster decided to make for the Bay of Antongil, especially as many of the men had fallen ill. On sighting the island of Sainte Marie they cast anchor, but it soon became apparent that apart from lemons and oranges, some goats' milk, and a little rice, there was nothing to be had. Also a storm arose, and the captain, realizing the dangerous nature of the shore, gave orders to sail away. At the entrance to the Bay of Antongil the ships found shelter behind a small island, on which the English discovered an inscription on the rocks from which it became apparent that five Dutch ships had been here some few months previously; that some two hundred of the crew had died and had been buried on this island—the second Dutchman's cemetery in those regions!

The experiences of the Englishmen during their two months' stay in this bay afforded ample scope for the organizing efforts of their leader; thus for instance, in order to prevent the merchants outbidding each other, and thereby raising prices, and having to do with natives 'crafty and lovers of bargains', he introduced a standard measure, approximately a quart, and fixed the rate how many beads were to be given for every measure. This was done also with regard to oranges, lemons, and plantains. Evidently there had been some opposition to his ruling, for, so writes the major-pilot, 'After a little holding off, the English merchants consented, and our dealing was frank and round, without any contradiction or words.'<sup>1</sup> Thanks to this regulated barter, fifteen and a half tons of rice and fifty bushels of peas and beans were bought, not to mention great stores of fruit, beeves and many fowl.

It was almost a year to the day after leaving England that the fleet raised anchor at Madagascar to sail for the Malay Archipelago.

If in the minds of the English there had been no intention of founding a colony in Madagascar, the King of France thought

<sup>1</sup> *Voyage of John Davis, Hakluyt.*

seriously of so doing; for the importance of that great island was duly beginning to be appreciated in France. Cosmographers published maps with Madagascar shown on them. Various books were brought out, in which all that was known of this island, from every point of view, was mentioned, with possibilities for commerce and its maritime importance, due to so many good natural harbours.

While statesmen were considering the possibility of overseas trade, two merchants of St. Malo, Martin de Vitré and François Pyrard de Laval, were 'up and doing'.<sup>1</sup> In 1602 they sailed with two vessels to India, in order to draw its treasures direct from the source.

Although it had not been planned to land at Madagascar, circumstances compelled the captains to do so. This they did, but with great trepidation, as no one on board had ever been this way.

The *Corbin*, after sailing thirty miles through yellow, frothy water, covered with sea-chestnuts, reeds, and floating grass, entered the Bay of St. Augustine. The same day, the *Croissant*, which had been separated from her in a storm near the Cape of Good Hope, also reached the bay, and so did a Dutch vessel.

The three captains, after consultation, drew up a most satisfactory scheme of co-operation, everything being arranged in concert—choice of site, barter with the natives, measures of security, care for the sick.

Pyrard de Laval's ship was wrecked on one of the Maladive Islands, and it was ten years before he returned to France. Six years he spent on these islands as a prisoner at large. The next four years he was partly among Malabar pirates and partly in compulsory service as a soldier on Portuguese convoy ships. He saw, in this way, a great deal of the world and learnt all there was to know of trade possibilities in spices and other Eastern merchandise.

On his return to France, Pyrard de Laval published the narrative of his experiences as a means to stir public interest in overseas trade. The book proved a great success, passing through several editions, while he himself was asked everywhere

<sup>1</sup> Pyrard de Laval, *Description du premier voyage que les marchands français de St. Malo, de Vitré et de Laval ont fait aux Indes Orientales*. 1619.

to tell what he had seen on his voyages in most parts of the world.

He succeeded in inducing a number of merchants of Paris and Rouen to found a company for trading with the East Indies, of which he became a director.

It was the admiral of this company's fleet, Augustin de Beaulieu, who was the first to realize the strategic importance of Madagascar. He described this great island as 'an excellent centre from which to carry on anything required to be done in the East Indies, whether for commerce or for war'.

## Chapter II

### KING CHARLES I AND MADAGASCAR

For the East India Company certain parts only of Madagascar were of interest, where their ships could find refreshment and their sick be restored. The situation of the Bay of St. Augustine made it a convenient place of rendezvous, and at times several ships of different nations would meet in this harbour. Here, too, letters could be left, as a kind of *poste restante* had been arranged under a certain tree, marked with special signs.

The whole island as such held no importance, or even any interest, for the directors of the great company. For them Madagascar was merely a conveniently situated stage on the route to India.

Among a certain coterie in London, however, other views were held. For these gentlemen—merchants, statesmen, courtiers—Madagascar had assumed great importance with regard both to commerce and to colonization. Their interest had been aroused by several men who had been to Madagascar and who had completely succumbed to its charm. It was declared to be the richest and most fruitful island in the world. Sir Thomas Herbert<sup>1</sup> gave it the name of 'Empress among islands'; while Admiral Sir William Monson<sup>2</sup> saw in Madagascar a rival to Virginia, far better fitted in every way to become a British colony—conveniently situated on the route to India. The prophets *par excellence* of Madagascar as a second Promised Land, flowing with milk and honey, were two former servants of the E.I.C., Richard Boothby<sup>3</sup> and Walter Hammond.<sup>4</sup>

The moving spirit in this new movement was Sir William Courten, who had a fleet of twenty vessels regularly trading with Guinea and the West Indies. The other merchant princes

<sup>1</sup> Sir Thomas Herbert, *Some Voyages*. London, 1658.

<sup>2</sup> Sir William Monson, *Naval Tracts*. London, 1650.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Boothby, *A Brief Discovery or Description of the Most Famous Island of Madagascar*, etc. London, 1646.

<sup>4</sup> Walter Hammond, *Madagascar, the Richest and the Most Fruitful Island in the World*. London, 1643.

interested in colonization were Sir Paul Pindar, whose purse had often been at the King's disposal, and Sir William Courten's intimate friend, Endymion Porter, Groom of the Bedchamber of King Charles I.

The other members of this particular group were the Earl of Arundel, the Earl of Southampton, the Earl of Denbigh, Sir Francis Windebank, Secretary of State, Admiral Sir William Monson, Mr. Craven, brother of the Earl of Craven, and Sir Thomas Herbert, one and all interested in British colonial enterprise in Madagascar.

Charles I always needed money. The kings of Portugal and Spain had drawn great revenues from the trade in the Indies, and he felt aggrieved with the East India Company for not having filled his purse sufficiently. When, therefore, his Groom of the Bedchamber proposed to him a new way of making money, he readily agreed to it. He granted to him and to his partners, two young city merchants, Kynaston and Bonnell, liberty 'to range the seas all the world over, and according to His Majesty's letters commissive, to capture enemy ships, and to seize their goods'.

In 1635 still another grievance was added by the King's granting Sir William Courten and his friends a charter for what was tantamount to a new East India Company. A plantation in Madagascar was foreseen. The King was personally interested in what came to be known as 'The Courten Association'. He had asked Sir Paul Pindar to become a shareholder and to pay in £36,000. On the other hand, the Company presented the King with shares to the value of £10,000,<sup>1</sup> and the Secretary of State, Sir Francis Windebank,<sup>2</sup> was also made a shareholder in like manner, though for a lesser amount.

What had given the stimulus to this new venture was an unexpected truce signed between the Viceroy of Goa and the President of the East India Company at Surat. The cessation of arms was to last until the kings of Spain and England reciprocally denounced it, six months to be allowed to the merchants to withdraw.

News of this truce was learnt first of all by Admiral Sir

<sup>1</sup> *Court Minutes: A Calendar of State Papers*, p. 123, p. 188.

<sup>2</sup> *P.R.O. East Indies*, vol. iv, B.i, Fol. 1, 11.

William Monson, who wrote to Secretary Windebank that he had met in the Channel the *Charles* and the *Jonah* under Captain Weddell 'who had information which might be of interest to the King, and by which he might get honour and profit'.<sup>1</sup> He announced that Captain Weddell, 'a discreet and experienced seaman, would go and see the secretary even before the Governors of the East India Company, that he was bringing for the King a present from the Viceroy of Goa, who has overtures to make to him'.

What Captain Weddell suggested was for the King of England to imitate the King of Spain, who, so it appeared, was 'the merchant of all the pepper which comes into Portugal'.<sup>2</sup>

The captain felt no compunction in making the suggestion to Endymion Porter and to Sir William Courten of benefiting by the opening offered by this truce, as he had a grievance against the Governors, and apparently a justifiable one. His admiral's ship had been burnt during his absence while in an Indian port, but they refused to give him another command. On the other hand, the president at Surat had nominated him admiral of the fleet in those waters. If the captain had a grievance, so had the Company, for he had again and again broken the law by carrying on private trading, a very common practice, even the chaplain having to be reprimanded on this score. The loss to the shareholders was enormous, at times only one quarter of the cargo being for the Company.

Captain Weddell, when brought to book for this practice, pleaded the great services he had rendered the Company, as well as to England in general in the East.

The King, instead of fairly and squarely giving the East India Company the two years' notice stipulated in the charter in the event that it should fail 'to be a benefit to the realm', now granted that new charter to Sir William Courten and to Endymion Porter, for trading all over the East, as well as 'to settle factories and to plant colonies after the Dutch manner'. Six ships, under Captain Weddell, were to be sent to the east coast of India, to China and Japan.

Sir William died before the fleet sailed, but the King confirmed the charter to his son, in spite of the opposition by, and complaints of, the Governors of the East India Company.

<sup>1</sup> op. cit. p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> At this time Portugal and Spain were under one king.



The 'Interlopers' had come to stay, a thorn in the flesh of the old company for many years to come, till finally the two rivals amalgamated into one great company; but meanwhile there was war. Thus when the Courten Association made a settlement in the Bay of St. Augustine, it was demolished by the East India Company.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time a scheme to found a plantation in the Bay of St. Augustine was being advocated by Endymion Porter and by Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, Lord Marshal of England, an ardent advocate of colonies, and a member of the Committee for Plantations. If Captain Weddell had been the agent for fostering the new trading scheme, two of the passengers on board his ships had aroused interest in Madagascar. These were Richard Boothby, a merchant, formerly in the service of the East India Company, with a grievance against it, and Walter Hammond, ship's surgeon. Both men had spent some months at St. Augustine's Bay, and were enthusiastic advocates of a plantation in that place.

Richard Boothby was introduced to Endymion Porter, to whom he made a present of weapons brought from Madagascar, as well as of dragon's blood and tortoise-shell. To John Tradescant, the King's gardener, he brought rare shells; to the Earl of Arundel he gave 'a book bound in leather with strange writing' which Dr. Grouch, the learned Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, to whom he had submitted the MS., had declared to be Egyptian hieroglyphics.<sup>2</sup> The Earl of Arundel presented the book to the King, whose interest in the proposed plantation in Madagascar was increasing. The Earl of Denbigh, also, had come back from his travels, and he brought to Charles I gold sand from that island.

There must have been frequent meetings of the Privy Council concerning Madagascar, for Richard Boothby, that prophet of the new 'Promised Land', mentions having thrice assisted at them, being taken there 'in his coach by the Honourable Endymion Porter'.

The King and his friends gladly believed all that Mr. Boothby told them of Madagascar. He emphasized the fact that 'whatever government soever of Christendom is once

<sup>1</sup> No details are to be had, the fact only is mentioned by David Macpherson, *The History of the European Commerce with India*, p. 118. 1812.

<sup>2</sup> R. Boothby, *op. cit.* p. 6.

really possessed and seated in strength in that brave and fruitful and pleasant land, may with ease be Emperor or sole Monarch of the East Indies, with all her multitudes of rich and large kingdoms'.

Boothby had discussed the suitability of a colony at the Bay of St. Augustine with a former factor of the Company, who had five times been there, and he too agreed, as did Walter Hammond, the surgeon, that it would be a simple matter to make Madagascar a centre for the whole Eastern trade. This island had not only a fertile soil and untold mineral wealth, but the interior, so these travellers believed, was one vast plain of meadow and pasture land, where cattle were grazing by the thousands. As to the climate, that was perfect; fruit was abundant and the toddy-tree provided wine. Slaves could be cheaply had for export to the factories in India. As to the inhabitants, 'a people approaching in some degree neere Adam, naked without guilt, innocent, not by force of virtue, but by ignorance of evil, and the animals as humble and serviceable to man as they were before the transgression'. In fact 'the cheefiste paradise this day upon earth'.<sup>1</sup>

Walter Hammond's pleas, if less poetical, were apparently more meant to appeal to the practical side. He insisted upon the situation of Madagascar as being two-thirds on the way to India, trade possibilities excellent, as also for ship-building and for victualling the outgoing vessels with salted meat.

Enthusiasm is infectious, and there were such serious men as Captain Weddell, a merchant, a surgeon and the two noble travellers, all of one opinion that Madagascar was the island *par excellence* to become an English colony.

Endymion Porter and his friends won over the King, who decided to send out his nephew, Prince Rupert, accompanied by Endymion Porter, to conquer a world, to provide thereby a glorious future for his kingdom.

However profitable and excellent in every way this scheme appeared to the King and his immediate companions, it seemed sheer folly to his sister, the exiled Queen of Bohemia, living at that time in the Hague. She wrote about this scheme to her friend Sir Thomas Roe: 'As for Rupert's *Romance of Madagascar*, it sounds like one of Don Quixote's conquests,

<sup>1</sup> R. Boothby, *op. cit.* p. 6.

where he promises his trusted squire to make him king of an island. I heard of it some days ago and thereupon I writt a letter to him to prevent him from it as a thing neither reasonable, safe nor honourable for him. Since then I have received a letter from G. who writes of it as a fine thing which I can not enough wonder at. I answered him plainlie and did not like of it. I thought it not fitt nor safe to send him, the second brother, to such an enterprise, when there was work enough to be had for him in Europe and besides I thought if Madagascar were a place either worth the taking or profitable to be kept, that the Portugalis by this time would have had it, and having so long time possest, most right to it. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Prince Rupert issued a public declaration in which he stated that 'having a desire to putt himself upon some honourable action', after careful consideration of all that had been brought forward concerning Madagascar, and, that it might easily be made 'the ballance of all the trade betwixt the East and Indies and this part(s) of the world' he was 'resolved to go to that said Island and to sit downe there and make it his plantation, which enterprise His Majesty doth much approve . . .<sup>2</sup> who will graciously assist his nephew and will consider it as his subjects' token of love if they will adventure their money, persons, kindred, and shipping with him'.

News of this reached his mother, and Sir Thomas Roc wrote to her: 'It is a course to lose the Prince in a desperate and fruitless action from which he urged the Queen to keep back her son.'

Probably the anxious mother did bring sufficient pressure upon the King, for the expedition was not at once undertaken. The idea revived, however, some months later, when Charles I asked the East India Company to participate in the proposed plantation in Madagascar.

The Company asked to be excused, but evidently the refusal was not accepted. A second time a deputation appeared before the Privy Council to declare the Company's inability 'owing to great losses and disturbances at home and in the Indies, to provide any supplies and therefore prays to be excused'.

The Prince, after all, did not sail for Madagascar. The

<sup>1</sup> Walter Hammond, *op. cit.* p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> *P.R.O. German Correspondence. Dom.*, ch. i. 1637. 14th April. 352.

reason for this disappointment becomes evident from Sir Thomas Roe's letter to the Queen of Bohemia. 'The dreame of Madagascar, I think, is vanished and the Squire must conquer his own island. A blunt merchant who called to deliver his opinion, said it was a gallant design, but such wherein he would be loth to venture his younger son.'<sup>1</sup>

Two years passed, and then the Earl of Arundel informed the King that he intended going himself to Madagascar to found a plantation. The King was delighted, promising him every assistance.<sup>2</sup> His Majesty's ship *Conservative*<sup>3</sup> was commanded to be made ready.

There is something heroic in this willingness of a man of fifty-four, of delicate health, a lover of art and culture, to forgo everything in order to undertake this arduous enterprise. Fortunately, Lady Arundel 'if wanting in the imaginative power which flung a poetic halo about all her husband's project, fully shared his love of travel and adventure'.<sup>4</sup>

The Earl's anticipated journey caused much interest and many comments. The Venetian Ambassador<sup>5</sup> wrote to the Doge that the Earl was doing all he could to prepare for the 'Conquest of Madagascar'.

In spite of the anxious mother's protests, everything was being prepared for the expedition. Twelve ships from the King's Navy were to go out and thirty merchantmen 'to attend the Prince in the plantation and to bring supplies'. Captain Bond, a friend of Richard Boothby and Mr. Hammond, was to proceed in advance to choose the place for the settlement and to fortify it.

In order to secure participators in this enterprise the Earl published a *Declaration concerning Madagascar*,<sup>6</sup> explaining under what conditions, and with what advantages, persons desirous of joining this venture could do so.

The Earl stated that he had carefully gone into the matter in order to be quite certain of the results of the occupation of Madagascar 'for the English Nation, for the propagation of

<sup>1</sup> *Calendar of Court Minutes of the East India Company*. 1638-9, p. 244.

<sup>2</sup> *P.R.O. Dom.*, ch. i, vol. ccclv, No. 172.

<sup>3</sup> *Calendar of State Papers. Dom.*, ch. i, 1639-40, 8th October 1639.

<sup>4</sup> Mary F. S. Hervey, 1921, *The Life and Correspondence of Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel*, p. 417.

<sup>5</sup> *P.R.O. Venetian Manuscript*, col. xxii, 14th October and 16th November 1639.

<sup>6</sup> *P.R.O., East Indies C.O.*, 77 fol. 69. 6th September 1639.

the Christian religion and for the prosecution of the Eastern trade', adding, 'knowing withal what inconvenience would arise to this Kingdom if that island should be planted by others'. He assured the prospective colonists that he had 'trustworthy information as to the riches and plenty of these places'. As to the bona fides of the enterprise, he expressed hope that his 'credit with the world will disabuse such as shall think this a vain and airy undertaking', in proof of which he intended to go himself to Madagascar with many of his friends. The fact that they are doing so and that he is putting so much money into this enterprise is a proof that he sees in it 'powerful enduements of honour and profit for his country and for himself'.

He declared that it was with the King's permission and assured assistance that he intended undertaking the colonization of Madagascar and all other islands within two hundred miles of it, including 'England's Forest',<sup>1</sup> as well as St. Helena.

The Earl of Arundel's *Declaration concerning Madagascar* concludes with the notice that the place appointed for this business was his house in Lothbury, between the hours of 8 and 11 a.m. It is dated 6th September 1639.

It was three weeks later that the East India Company received a letter from the Earl announcing his intention to proceed to Madagascar 'with many of his friends in order to make a plantation on that island'. He 'desires the Company to contract with him for freighting the ships he intends sending (which will be well-furnished with men, ammunitions, and provisions) to transport its pepper and other goods from Madagascar to England'.<sup>2</sup> But once again the Company, while humbly thanking him for the proposal, begged to be excused, as ships had already been freighted, and 'that with those out in India, it did not require any others'.

How great must have been the joy of these anxious Governors when the Earl's great enterprise was after all not carried out! What the actual cause was for the abandonment of this scheme on which the Earl had expended so much love and thought, can only be surmised. His health being in a precarious state, a sudden illness most likely put an end to his hopes and to the whole scheme, of which he was the very soul.

<sup>1</sup> The island of Bourbon, visited in 1613 by an English captain, who named it 'England's Forest'.

<sup>2</sup> *Calendar of Court Minutes of the East India Company*, 1635-9, p. 328.

Van Dyke, who was at this time in England, has painted a picture of the Earl and his wife, which represents the Earl sitting behind a large globe on which Madagascar catches the eye, but he is looking away holding a pointer in his hand, as though to say: 'I wanted to show you Madagascar, but what is the use? That dream has vanished!' On the other hand, Lady Arundel, who is sitting beside her husband, is pointing with a small stick at the island as much as to say: 'At any rate, I did not prevent you from going there.'

Simultaneously with the Earl of Arundel's Madagascar scheme, the colonization of Mauritius was being seriously considered by Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton. Sir Thomas Herbert, especially, had been giving glowing descriptions of this desirable island, hitherto unclaimed by either the Portuguese or the Dutch. The Earl of Southampton had no difficulty in finding adventurers ready to join him. At the very moment when the Earl of Arundel's *Declaration* was inviting Englishmen to colonize Madagascar, Captain Bell was to take out the first party of settlers. However, the East India Company, true to its policy, obstructed the departure. The captain was told that 'the Court intended by all means to oppose his proceedings, condemning all plantations whether in Madagascar or in Mauritius'.

The Earl of Southampton and his friends spent large sums of money on this scheme, yet in spite of this and the King's approbation, the colonization of Mauritius could not be carried out, for news reached London that the States-General had laid claim to that fertile island.

In spite of the failure of the three attempts at colonizing those islands, the idea was not altogether dropped. A year later Sir William Monson, Admiral of the King's Fleet, published a tract with advice on the colonization of Madagascar.<sup>1</sup> As he had not been there himself he had carefully inquired 'from those who could speak from experience', facts 'concerning the fitness of that greatest of islands in the world to have plantations'. He had arrived at the conclusion that Madagascar excelled Virginia in many respects. He advised that two ships should be stationed there permanently, to carry out

<sup>1</sup> *The Naval Tracts*, by Sir William Monson (1640), vol. iv, p. 434.

investigations. He was convinced that then 'the very heart of the whole island would be discovered and', so he added, 'no doubt we shall discover variety of gainful things, unthought of by us as yet'. He felt sure that by having plantations on that island, navigation would be much more pleasant, shorter and more profitable. The admiral hoped that the Malagasy of those parts where the settlements would be might be willing to let their children be educated in England as 'the best method to work our good in our plantations and the only means to propagate the Christian religion in remote parts'.

Whether Sir William Monson's partisanship of the colonization of Madagascar had a direct influence on what happened next, cannot be established. Two years later, Captain Bond, who should have taken Prince Rupert's advance guard to Madagascar and who had held his Royal Warrant ever since 1639, at last prepared to sail for Madagascar with 240 men and 50 women; a plan which was never carried out. He had met with much opposition, as becomes evident from remarks in Walter Hammond's book dedicated to him as 'Captain-General of Madagascar'. This panegyric tempted many to become planters, who were assured that it was not because of its worthlessness that the Portuguese had not claimed the island, as the Queen of Bohemia and probably many others assumed, but because Mozambique answered their purpose. Hammond declared that it was for the English, for patriotic and religious reasons, to plant a colony in Madagascar. Missionary zeal made the ship's surgeon poetic, for he thus concludes his appeal. 'This Virgin Island doth hereby friendly and lovingly invite our nation to take compassion on her . . . to deliver her from the tyranny of Satan. . . .'

In a most interesting book on his voyages to the East, Sir Thomas Herbert, in his turn, puts forward a missionary plea with regard to the inhabitants, and Richard Boothby states in the preface to his book that Bishop Moreton had mentioned to him that Madagascar was to become 'a special receptacle for truly religious English Protestants', who were also to convert the Malagasy.

In 1644, the Courten Association, backed by the King, at last sent 140 colonists to Madagascar, a cousin of Endymion Porter's partner Kynaston, John Smart, having been appointed

leader. A number of well-connected men accompanied this enterprise as planters.

Richard Boothby had never wearied in his praises of that new Promised Land, and all he told and wrote about it was accepted as gospel truth. It was therefore with high hopes for a glorious future that the settlers started out for that island, where they believed the English were loved by the natives, whose King had invited them to settle among his people, and who had promised to Captain Weddell and Mr. Boothby 'so much land as would serve to maintain one hundred thousand men'.<sup>1</sup>

How terrible, therefore, was their disappointment to find the natives of the Bay of St. Augustine unfriendly and unwilling to trade with them, even preventing other tribes from doing so, or when they had succeeded in buying cattle some hundreds of miles away, stealing them. Five of the colonists were treacherously murdered, while many fell victims to the unhealthy climate. The leader, seeing how impossible conditions were, sailed along the coast in search of a better place. He came to the small island of Nossi Bé, off the Bay of Assada, which seemed a likely place for a settlement. When he came back he found the plantation in a terrible state. This decided him to write a true statement of things to his friends at home. In this letter,<sup>2</sup> countersigned by three of the leading colonists, he mentions that on his return from his journey of exploration he had found the plantation 'in a most deplorable condition', that out of the hundred healthy people he had left, only sixty were alive, 'most of them sick, and almost starved. To make matters worse, two ships had arrived without bringing anything for the settlers, neither for their personal use, nor for barter, and these ships required revictualling. 'It is strange to me', Smart writes, 'who 'tis put Mr. Courten upon such Chimeras as of sending abroad such ships without victual or stock.' He concludes thus: 'Please comisurate with our miserable state and send us some supplies from India—what you shall think necessary for our relief—otherwise in all likelihood we have no other way but to perish and dye miserably. . . .'

He informed his friends that he had decided to take the 30 men, 11 women, and 18 lads to Mayotta, and begged that

<sup>1</sup> op. cit. p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *India Office, O.C.*, vol. xx, 1992, 1993.



Captain Weddell be sent to fetch them away from there to India 'so that they may not perish'.

In the Court Minutes of the Company it is recorded that 'an order should be obtained from Parliament requiring it to bring those miserable people home'.

This was done, but 9 only of the 140 colonists lived to tell the tale of their experiences during the thirteen months at St. Augustine's Bay, which had not proved a Garden of Eden.

Among those who returned was Powle Waldegrave, gentleman, who attributed the whole blame for this appalling catastrophe to Richard Boothby's glowing descriptions. He admitted having believed them, just as the King, the Earl of Arundel, Endymion Porter and all the others had done, but now that his 'eyes are witness to the contrary', he felt it his duty to proclaim the truth concerning Madagascar. He therefore published a pamphlet in which he refuted, point by point, what experience had taught him to regard as 'lying information', although he admits not being able to understand how a man honest in every other way could write such lies.

Powle Waldegrave saw only what was exaggerated in Boothby's book. He felt certain that, had Boothby and Hammond, whose commendations had influenced Mr. Courten to send planters there, been at the Bay of St. Augustine, 'the rage of starving men would have torn them to pieces'.<sup>1</sup>

Towards the Company he was full of gratitude that, in response to the cry of despair, it had delivered them from Madagascar, 'from which place God divert the residence and adventures of all good men'.

Because St. Augustine's Bay had been proved unsuitable for a plantation, then why not try at some other place in Madagascar? Thus argued certain business men who petitioned Parliament to be allowed to make a plantation on an island off Assada Bay, at Nossi Bé. Not only John Smart, but various English captains, having called there, had been welcomed by the king, who had promised them the whole country to be at their command, if they would return and settle there.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Powle Waldegrave, 1649. An answer to Mr. Boothby's book.

<sup>2</sup> Lt.-Col. R. Hunt, *The Island of Assada*. 1650.

The moment seemed propitious to launch a scheme of a plantation on the island, but when news of the proposed petition to Parliament was discussed by the Company, there was great excitement. It was felt that what was desired 'is so large a latitude that if it be granted it will be sufficient to undo any East India Company'. Apparently the very rumour of this scheme proved fatal to the Company, which was just then trying to raise subscriptions towards a new issue of capital. It had to be suspended, and Parliament was asked for an Act to hinder the proceedings of the prospective planters at Assada. What made matters worse was that Sir Thomas Fairfax stood sponsor to this scheme.

While the Company was in the throes of excitement, preparations for the plantations were quickly carried on. There was the twofold aspect, that of the plantations and of trade, but the latter was no concern of Lt.-Col. R. Hunt, whose whole heart was in the colonizing scheme. Assada<sup>1</sup>—or Nossi Bé, as the Malagasy called the island—was to be made at all costs a British plantation. The colonel fully believed in this, and therefore, to win colonists, he published a pamphlet, *The Island of Assada neere Madagascar*.

In response to his friends' request he explained the reasons which had decided him to go there himself, for evidently worldly-wise arguments had been brought up against his going, when everything life could offer was his in England. In a simple, straightforward apologia he stated that ever since he had been to Barbados and the West Indies, 'nurseries of Trade for England, he had fixed his eyes upon such an undertaking'. Yet it was from a religious motive also that he wished to go to Nossi Bé, being convinced that 'the Lord has a great worke for his servants to make known the Lord Jesus Christ to the poor Natives in those Eastern parts of the world. I shall rejoice if the Lord shall please by me to open a door for that purpose.'

Also, he believed a plantation in these parts to be of great advantage to trade and navigation.

The colonel wrote from his heart, for his zeal for his country's welfare was no less than for that of the Kingdom of

<sup>1</sup> 'Assada' is a corruption of an Arab word used in those parts for 'fort'. *Grandidier*, op. cit. tome iii, 260.

Heaven: 'Since the discovery of this island of Assada, I had longing thoughts and earnest desire of going hither, looking upon it as a work of great concernment for the future of this Nation, and, out of our first attempt, I hope, God in due time will do great things; therefore let me continue the enterprise of small things. My purpose, by the blessing of the Almighty, is to endeavour the settlement of an honest and just Government there, nearest to the laws of this land, for greatest encouragement and security to Adventurers; and for the better carrying on this work, my intentions are to settle two or three godly men as Agents, at the King of the north end of Madagascar's Court, whose work shall be to endeavour to influence him and his people in the knowledge of the Gospell of Jesus Christ and to keep a loving and peaceable correspondence with him.'

The island being supposed to be able to maintain 'a hundred thousand people in a way of trade and plantation', a fort and a town were to be built close to the good harbour.

Colonel Hunt stated that there were in the island some five hundred Malagasy who had revolted against the King, at Assada Bay; that he intended to buy the island from that King, once he had been granted trade facilities, which those who knew that King assured him he would be ready to give.

Having Barbados in mind, the Colonel foresaw in every way greater benefits from this island, which was to become for the English what Goa was for the Portuguese and Batavia for the Dutch.

Meanwhile, after many proposals and counter-proposals between the Company and the Assada merchants, an agreement for co-operation was reached. However, this did not make the Governors any more enthusiastic about the plantation than before, for they did not believe that 'Assada, being a small island not far from the great island of Madagascar, could be made profitable to planters, no more than Madagascar, which had been so fatal to the Portuguese, Dutch, French, and English'.<sup>1</sup>

Colonel Hunt and his friends sailed early in 1649 on the *Assada Merchant*. It was not until 1st July 1650 that the first news concerning their fate was received.

<sup>1</sup> *Calendar of Court Minutes of the East India Company*, op. cit. 1644-9, p. 366.

The *Benito* and the *Lyoness* bringing out more planters came upon a small boat with a few Europeans, who turned out to be the survivors of what had proved a tragic failure.

It appeared that instead of living upon the island of Nossi Bé, they had lived upon a small one which they called Goats' Island; that the majority of the planters had died, including Colonel Hunt. Then, a few days before the arrival of the English ships, the master, the purser and nine others had been murdered by the King of Assada, who had enticed them on shore by promises of having large pieces of ambergris to sell. Of the crew of the *Assada Merchant* one sailor only was still alive, and of the settlers just these few men.

The question was what to do next. A council was held, which decided that, as a compromise—for evidently opinions were divided—a settlement was to be made at the southern part of Nossi Bé. Here the planters were to remain provisionally for six months, till a final decision could be arrived at by the President in Surat.

Carpenters were sent on shore to build a fortified place, and a sure anchorage for the pinnacle was made. Provisions for six months were unloaded, and Major Hartley was appointed Governor in Colonel Hunt's place. In fact, the Major had been destined for this by the Company, in case of such an event.

The *Lyoness* sailed direct for Madras, while the *Benito* proceeded to the island of Johanna to leave letters for any English ship which might stop there, to convey to London information of what had happened.

The purser of the *Benito*, whose diary was of great value for the navigation in those waters, and who reported the sad news, wrote on 6th July: 'Set sail from ye island of Noosa . . . and my desire is never to (see or) come to Assada again.'<sup>1</sup>

This wish the planters also uttered, for the experiment proved a failure: some were treacherously killed by the natives; others died owing to ignorance of the climate; all lost heart. The survivors, instead of holding out six months, after only seven weeks proceeded to Surat on the *Assada Merchant*, where some entered the service of the Company; the others returned home—ruined.

<sup>1</sup> Journal kept by Ch. Wilde. Brit. Mus. Sloane Col. MSS., No. 3231.

But while tragedy was rife in Nossi Bé, in London the Assada plantation was frequently under consideration; also new settlers were coming forward. At one of the Company's meetings a member suggested that it might be advisable to send the King of Assada some presents, whereupon another gentleman mentioned that a small chariot which had belonged to Queen Anne Boleyn, bought for £100 when new, could be had for £16 or £17. His suggestion being accepted, he was asked, 'to see into the matter, but even if the chariot was to prove unsuitable for the king it might be sent out to the Bay or wherever it might be sold most profitably. But, in any case, a sword and a looking-glass should be sent to him.'<sup>1</sup>

While the Englishmen were having such kindly thoughts, this ruler was plotting treachery and murder.

At the very time when the *Benito* was nearing Surat with its tale of woe, forty new colonists reached Assada in the *Discovery*, only to find neither settlement nor colonists. The captain, unable to get any information from the natives, sailed to the Comoro Islands, hoping there to be more fortunate. But here misleading information was given him, that the planters had gone on to Massalodge, on the mainland of Madagascar, to sail from there to Mozambique. Contrary winds, however, forced him to give up what would have been another wild-goose chase, and, utterly in the dark as to what had happened, he sailed for Surat, taking the disappointed planters with him to India.

Meanwhile, in London, a new president had been elected to proceed to Surat—Captain Blackman, who, as was the custom, stopped at St. Augustine's Bay for refreshment. Here he found two letters: one, specially sent by the *Assada Merchant*, which told him of the abandonment of Nossi Bé; the other, from the captain of the *Welcome*, to inform him that he had more settlers on board, and that he had been separated from the *Friendship*, but that Assada had been fixed as a place of meeting. Here was a dilemma, the captain feeling bound by his contract to take the settlers on board his ship to the supposed plantation. He therefore sailed to Nossi Bé, hoping to meet there the two other ships.

<sup>1</sup> *Calendar of Court Minutes of the East India Company*, op. cit. 1650, p. 11.

This he did, but in view of what had happened, the prospective settlers had to give up all hope of becoming planters, and were taken to India. Captain Blackman visited the leading native, who, however, refused point-blank to give any information; nor would he let any barter be carried on without the permission of the King at Assada having been asked. The captain's personal impression was that the island might have been made into a plantation,<sup>1</sup> and he regretted the hasty departure of the settlers, who, so he thought, might have held out at least for the six months. He admitted, however, that unless a large enough force of men was settled there, at least 600 to 800, no security was assured to the Europeans. This, naturally, would entail too great an expenditure.

Thus ended the attempts of Englishmen to colonize Madagascar and its adjacent islands. What had been a pleasant dream for Prince Rupert proved to be a nightmare to those who did attempt the venture.

<sup>1</sup> To-day Nossi-Bé is exploited with great profit.

### Chapter III

#### MADAGASCAR AND LOUIS XIV

WHILE England was steadily extending her sea power, enriching herself by colonies, France was lagging behind, handicapped by the civil wars. Private individuals, however, continued to send ships all over the world, including Madagascar, and this at the very time when those vain attempts to colonize that island were being made from England.

These Frenchmen desired to make this supposed 'Earthly Paradise' a French possession, and Cardinal Richelieu, whose visions for the aggrandizement of France were unbounded, readily lent an ear to every suggestion likely to further this end. He did so when approached by two captains, who had both visited the East Indies and Madagascar. The Sieur de Rigault was the moving spirit in this matter, and in 1642 the Société Française de l'Orient was duly formed, to which the Cardinal granted the monopoly for ten years.

The chief shareholders were five members of the Privy Council, some high court functionaries, and military leaders; in fact, it was a counterpart to the Courten Association. The King granted an extensive charter; the only charges laid upon the Company being to swear fealty to each new sovereign, and to present him with a golden crown and sceptre.

In England these attempts were watched with keen interest, and Sir Philip Meadows paraphrased the motto Richelieu had put on the sterns of the largest vessels—'Florent quoque lilia ponto'—by 'Richelieu first taught France that the fleur-de-luce could grow at sea as well as on land.'<sup>1</sup>

The Sieur de Rigault did not wait for the King's signature to launch his scheme, being assured of the Cardinal's patronage, and therefore of the King's consent. He made use of some ships sailing to Madagascar to send by them an agent, the Sieur Pronis, whose orders were 'to take possession of the island, to dwell there and to occupy himself in trading'.

<sup>1</sup> D'Avenal, *Richelieu et la Monarchie absolue*.

The Sieur Pronis, a native of La Rochelle, first visited the islands of Rodrigue and Mascarene; the latter he named Bourbon, and after having taken possession of both in the name of the King of France, he sailed to Madagascar, where he did likewise with the island of St. Marie and the Bay of Antongil. As his headquarters he chose a place further south, in the province of Anossi, where, having received the permission of the chief ruler, he built a fort. Soon after, however, he removed to a healthier site, which he named Fort Dauphin, in homage to the Dauphin, who, meanwhile, had succeeded his father as Louis XIV.

The ruler of Anossi, Dian Ramaka, showed himself most friendly to the Frenchman. He spoke Portuguese fluently, having spent three years in Goa, a Spanish captain having taken him there when a lad. The Viceroy had entrusted the Malagasy prince to the care of the Jesuit Fathers, and when he asked to be baptized, having been duly instructed, the Viceroy became his godfather. Three years later Dian Ramaka was sent back to his native land, accompanied by two Jesuits, who taught and baptized quite a number of Malagasy. This did not please Dian Ramaka's father, who had no use at all for Christianity, although on the return of his son, he, the pagan king, had been made Knight of the Order of Christ of Portugal. The golden chain and cross, together with other costly presents sent him by the Viceroy, he kept carefully in a special hut. Nevertheless, short of killing the missionaries, he made their existence unbearable, for by his orders they were boycotted by the people, who brought them no food. There was thus no choice but to return to Goa.

Left to himself, Dian Ramaka gradually succumbed to his father's influence, relapsing into paganism, without, however, practising polygamy.<sup>1</sup>

The task before the Sieur Pronis was no easy one, for he had to compel the few Frenchmen trading habitually with the Malagasy to bring him all their barter, as belonging henceforth to the Company. What added to his difficulties was the perpetual friction between him and the soldiers and the

<sup>1</sup> *Memoire de la Congregation de la Mission*. Tome IX. Lettre de M. Bourdaise à St. Vincent de Paul, 1657.



colonists whom he had brought out. Conditions were aggravated by religious differences, for in those days feelings ran high between Roman Catholics and Huguenots; the *Sieur Pronis* and a few of the men being Protestants.

There was frequent trouble also with the natives, which, however, ceased when, following the advice of *Dian Ramaka*, the Governor consented to marry the Chief's niece, with whom he had been living for some time previously. If by this act he put himself right in the eyes of the Malagasy, he did not in those of his compatriots, who refused to acknowledge it as a valid marriage. It was to prove one of the many cases in which women were concerned, to bring about tragedy at Fort Dauphin, and which, in the course of thirty years, were to be enacted in this first French settlement.

One may question the Roman Catholic colonists' criticism of his marriage; not so their complaints about the stores of the Company being wasted, a direct result of that union; for the relations of his wife claimed it as their right to live at her husband's expense.

The Frenchmen had, however, still other grievances. They had expected to supervise 'black men', but found themselves obliged to till the ground themselves, while the Malagasy looked on; and, to add insult to injury, were considered by them to be the slaves of the *Sieur Pronis*.

This combination of hatred of the heretic and of the wastrel of public property brought about a conspiracy. Soldiers and colonists put the *Sieur Pronis* into irons, intending to keep him a prisoner until orders from France could reach them. They elected one of the officers as temporary commander, and their life continued its hopeless cycle.

In France complete ignorance reigned as to how matters stood in Madagascar; this because the reports the *Sieur Pronis* had despatched had never reached the directors.

At last, in Fort Dauphin, the mutineers let themselves be persuaded by their commander to set the *Sieur Pronis* free after six months' strict confinement. Liberty was granted him on his having promised a full amnesty. Alas, the *Sieur Pronis* broke his word, and the mean vengeance he took on the ring-leaders called forth intense antagonism. As though it was not enough to have enraged his compatriots, he did the same to the

natives by treacherously capturing some friendly Malagasy, whom he sold to a captain to be taken to Mauritius. The Dutch Governor of that island had suggested this traffic, because he needed labourers.

From this moment a new factor came into play—fear. At the mere sight of a vessel the natives would flee inland in terror, lest a like fate might befall them. A situation pregnant with fatal consequences had been created, for the perfidy of one man was henceforth imputed to all Frenchmen. The climax was reached when by one of his inconsiderate acts the *Sieur Pronis* antagonized *Dian Ramaka*.

It is the old story of love, infidelity and jealousy. Massacre was in the air!

Some of the colonists withdrew inland; others went to the Bay of St. Augustine. Twenty-nine men only remained at Fort Dauphin.

Fortunately for the *Sieur Pronis*, his wife's nurse betrayed the plot. For the moment the danger was past, but for how long?

While these events were happening out in far-away Madagascar, certain vital changes had taken place in Paris with regard to the Company. After the death of its powerful promoter and protector, Cardinal Richelieu, his cousin and heir, the Duc de la Meilleraie, Field-Marshal of France, had stepped into his place. Soon after, the Duke decided to form his own company, hoping to secure for it the privileges of the old Company de l'Orient. He intended to carry out much bolder and larger schemes for trade and colonization than had hitherto been planned.

The Duc de la Meilleraie was not only one of the best soldiers of his day, a master in taking fortresses, but he was as keen on attacking the stronghold of paganism; his great aim being to spread Christianity among the heathen. Madagascar was to be won for Christ. For this purpose he had come into touch with Monsieur Vincent de Paul, a man of great spiritual power, and of influence among high and low—a precursor of John Wesley and of General Booth. His time was being given to open-air preaching and to helping the outcasts. But in his great and loving heart there was also a place for the heathen.

Monsieur Vincent de Paul was therefore only too happy to be approached by the Duke on the matter. It was decided to send two of the members of the Brotherhood<sup>1</sup> he had founded to Fort Dauphin at the very next opportunity. In this missionary enterprise a niece of Cardinal Richelieu, the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, was also deeply interested, and during many years she did her utmost to further the missionary cause.

At last news reached Paris that all was not well at Fort Dauphin. This, with the unfulfilled expectations of commercial gain, and the allegations against the *Sieur Pronis*, decided the shareholders to send one of their members to investigate matters. The choice fell on one of the largest shareholders, a capable business man, the *Sieur Etienne de Flacourt-Bizet*.

This newly appointed Director-General was the descendant of an Englishman, Henry Bizet, *Sieur de Flacourt*, who defended the town of Targon against the French under the lead of the Maid of Orleans, who had just then taken that city. Charles VII granted an amnesty, in which the sons of that English commander were included, who became his loyal subjects.

Etienne de Flacourt, whose maternal uncle, Monsieur de Loynes, was secretary to the King, was a far-travelled, cultured gentleman, a writer of verses in Latin and French, a keen lover of natural history, of medicine and chemistry, all of which he had studied. To such a man a visit to Madagascar was naturally of interest, for while carrying out his duties as Director-General he would have plenty of opportunity to study, in so interesting an island and its inhabitants, something hitherto not yet seriously attempted. Scholar and business man, he was at the same time as keen on the conversion of the heathen as the Marshal and as Monsieur Vincent de Paul, and a contemporary wrote of him that 'Giving up a life of ease in Paris, he went out courageously, at the risk of his life, to establish the glory of the French name and that of Christian piety.'<sup>2</sup>

The two Lazarists, whom their spiritual father had chosen as specially fitted to be the pioneers, did likewise. The instructions given them, comprehensive and full of wise and practical advice, touched many points. They were told that

<sup>1</sup> The Lazarists.

<sup>2</sup> *Eloges de feu Monsieur de Flacourt, Directeur-General de la Compagnie Française d'Orient*. Paris, 1660.

although due respect was always to be shown to the men in authority at Fort Dauphin, yet violence was never to be done to conscience. Great care was to be taken not to spoil or hinder the work of God by being too hasty.

Among the books the missionaries took out were two Bibles, and during the voyage they ministered to and instructed the crew and passengers. They also studied the language with two Malagasy who had been brought to France.

On arrival at Fort Dauphin in 1648, the Sieur de Flacourt found everything in as bad a condition as could be, lack of food and lack of housing being the first impressions of the sixty-six new colonists, who had to be lodged with the natives. The Director-General lost no time in making an inquiry into the accusations against his predecessor, a trial at which, it is reported, he used such leniency that he did not condemn the accused, but actually offered to retain him as one of his assistants, but on condition that the Malagasy lady be sent away the very next day.

What her husband's feelings were with regard to the ultimatum the Sieur de Flacourt does not report, but of those of the wife there is no doubt, for before she had heard this verdict she had paid him a visit, arriving 'sad and perplexed',<sup>1</sup> her slaves having told her that the Sieur Pronis was to be put in irons. The Director-General must have felt a mean hypocrite when reassuring her that 'nothing of the kind was going to happen; on the contrary he was going to treat him as a brother'.

The next morning the poor lady left, carried by her slaves in a filanzane and taking with her a little daughter of three months.

The stumbling-block removed, the next thing to be done was to fetch back the twelve men the Sieur Pronis had banished to the island of Bourbon, and those others from the Bay of St. Augustine. When this last party returned, they reported on what they had learnt there from a Malagasy, who spoke English fluently, of the tragic experiences of the English would-be colonists. The large number of newly made graves in the cemetery also proved that most of them had died.

From the day of his arrival at Fort Dauphin the Sieur de

<sup>1</sup> Etienne Flacourt, *Histoire de la Grande Isle de Madagascar*. Paris, 1658.

Flacourt had carefully recorded his experiences. His report of the seven years of his tenure makes interesting but sad reading, for apart from the story of a few encouraging incidents, such as when a number of chiefs made their submission to him, as to the representative of the King of France, or detailed descriptions of the country and its people, their habits and customs, it is the same weary story of suffering from lack of food, of death, of treachery and massacre, of expeditions to get by force, by fire and bullet, the cattle the natives refused to supply. As to trade, this was hindered by the Malagasy custom of eating the skin of the animals with the flesh,<sup>1</sup> and the wax with the honey. This proved a great obstacle, as hides and wax were the most profitable articles of export.

If the Director-General was kept busy warring against the inhabitants, the two missionaries had their hands full, as a great eagerness to be taught was evinced by the people. Unfortunately, le Père Gondrée died within three months, and Monsieur Nacquart was left alone to cope with the problem of how to teach the Malagasy Christianity while professed Christians were living most unchristian lives.

The missionary loved the people and believed really good work might be done among them away from the settlement, for instance at Matitana, where the chiefs were offering him every facility. Indeed, they begged him to come and teach them and their children, but what could one man do with so many opportunities? He therefore wrote to his Superior suggesting that a large number of workers be sent out, as educational, medical and industrial missionaries, including woman workers to teach the girls; also the establishment of boarding schools for boys and girls, who, having been instructed and baptized, could become the founders of Christian families.

The Père Naquart had prepared a catechism, a copy of which he sent to France to be printed. He also suggested that the Malagasy, hitherto written in Arabic script, should be transcribed into Latin letters, as much easier to master.<sup>2</sup>

Just about this time, in 1650, there was an opportunity to send merchandise to France. The Sieur de Flacourt used it also to rid himself of the most turbulent and undesirable

<sup>1</sup> In the absence of cooking utensils the skin was used to bake the meat.

<sup>2</sup> In 1820 this was done by order of Radama, King of the Hovas, and for that very same reason.

element among the colonists, and the *Sieur Pronis* also left Fort Dauphin by this vessel.

Unfortunately for those lonely men in Madagascar, their very existence seemed to have escaped the memory of the directors and shareholders of the Company. The returns from the Madagascar enterprise had proved negligible, Fort Dauphin was so far away, and conditions in France were pre-occupying the minds of every one.

What disappointment, what sufferings this negligence and forgetfulness were to entail, these gentlemen in Paris never knew; but hope deferred makes the heart grow weary. The *Sieur de Flacourt* found himself in sore straits, as year after year passed without any vessel calling at the island. The men clamoured to be taken back to France; but how to do it?—that was the question. Something had to be done; therefore he decided to have the barque made seaworthy for sailing to France if possible; or if not, at least as far as Mauritius, Goa or Mozambique, so as to get help and send news to Paris. Before starting out on this venture he had a marble stele brought to Fort Dauphin from the place where the first and last Portuguese settlers had been massacred. The arms of the King of Portugal were engraved on one side, on the other the *Sieur de Flacourt* had the three fleurs-de-lys cut in, and the following inscription:

|                       |                                 |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| ADVENA                | O Stranger who passeth by       |
| MONITA NOSTRA         | read my counsels.               |
| TIBI TUIS VITAE       | They will be profitable to thee |
| TUAE PROFUTURA        | Do not trust the inhabitants    |
| CAVE AB INCOLIS. VALE | and farewell.                   |

The plan to sail to Mozambique was frustrated by wind and men, for his carpenters, once they realized his intention, refused to do anything unless he promised to sail direct to France. To this he had to agree. When they were already close to the Cape of Good Hope the wind turned, and the weary and disappointed men saw their barque driven back to Madagascar.

The reception given to the *Sieur de Flacourt* at Fort Dauphin by the colonists was far from friendly. In fact, they were up in arms against him for not having told them that he had intended to sail to France, and for leaving them behind.

However, since he had acted thus, they did not any longer consider him their chief. When this state of mind became known to the *Sieur de Flacourt*, he gave orders for every one to appear at morning prayers, after which he explained his reasons for wishing to reach some port or other, as the only means for sending letters to the directors and to *Monsieur Vincent de Paul*.

The outcome of it was that all the men begged him to go himself to France, not attempt to double the Cape, but by the overland route from Goa via Persia and Syria, as the quickest way. Their leader had, however, good reasons for not doing so at that time; but he promised to do it if by July no ship had come from France; he would, however, send letters to *Mozambique* at the first opportunity.

Six months passed, during which peace was at last concluded with several great chiefs, mutual forgiveness for past injuries was agreed upon, and Louis, King of France, was accepted by them as their sovereign.

As by July no ship had arrived, and conditions were becoming absolutely desperate, the *Sieur de Flacourt* secured the assistance of certain chiefs who undertook to see that a letter should be taken across country to the Bay of *St. Augustine*, to be handed to the first captain of whatever vessel should touch there.

The letter stated that having had no news or assistance from France, and having had no possibility of sending letters, the *Sieur de Flacourt* could but assume that the directors of the Company believed him and his men to have been massacred. A veritable S O S! The recipient of the letter is entreated 'as a Christian to render assistance to other Christians' and, if he could not come himself to *Fort Dauphin*, to see to it that the letters addressed to the General Secretary of the Navy and Privy Councillor of the King were delivered at some French port. There was one more request—for news of war and peace in Europe. The letter ends with the statement that, if the captain did the great act of charity, to come to the rescue of sixty-six Frenchmen, then he might rest assured of their prayers for his prosperity and health.

With what feelings the reply was received can be imagined; but, alas, the Dutch captain who received the letter wrote to

regret that, being on his way to Batavia, he was not able to come to the rescue with provisions, which he would have done gladly had the *Sieur de Flacourt* sent a barque to the Bay of St. Augustine. As things were he could but inform him that the princes of the blood were not at one with the King, and England and the States-General were at war.

Then one day the rumour reached the *Sieur de Flacourt* that two ships had arrived some way off Fort Dauphin; but he had been disappointed too often to give credence to this tale. It was therefore a great surprise to him to see two Europeans coming along. These he took for Portuguese, owing to the shape of their hats, 'as those big hats had not been in fashion in France in 1648'.

The newcomers proved to be Frenchmen, who handed him a polite letter from the captain, in which he informed the *Sieur de Flacourt* that he had two letters for him and that his orders were to render him every assistance; and he asked like help for his crew.

These letters left the *Sieur de Flacourt* utterly perplexed; *M. Fouquet*, the Finance Minister, one of the chief shareholders of the Company, merely wrote to say that he intended sending out by the next opportunity more priests to minister to the Christians and to convert the heathen. The other letter, from the *Sieur de Flacourt's* brother, merely recommended to his care two new missionaries.

There was not a word of the Company, nor any inquiry as to how matters stood. The two missionaries who duly arrived handed the puzzled Director-General a letter from Field-Marshal the Duc de la Meilleraie, which was even more perturbing. After mentioning that he had heard some years previously that the *Sieur de Flacourt* had been left without assistance by the Company, he had received the King's permission to despatch these two ships with merchandise and with everything that would be useful to found a great, well-assured settlement, and that if the *Sieur de Flacourt* would be willing to co-operate with him, he might rest assured that he would receive full satisfaction.

What could this mean? True, the concession granted to the *Compagnie de l'Orient* had run out two years ago; but what of the men who had not received any salary, and who were



clamouring to be paid? They were furious 'to be denuded of all things', and this was no mere figure of speech, for one of the newly arrived missionaries wrote 'every one is naked from head to belt—no hats, no shoes.'

To make matters worse and the disappointment more bitter, the ships had not only brought nothing to the colonists, but the crew was in a like plight; nor had any new colonists arrived. One of the captains turned out to be the *Sieur Pronis*, who, so he said, had come out as a friend, to trade and to see his wife and child. He had all sorts of useful things for barter, which he desired to exchange for the merchandise the *Sieur de Flacourt* had accumulated. The *Sieur Pronis* explained that, in view of the fact that the other shareholders had failed to carry out their part, the Duke, as heir of Cardinal Richelieu, had claimed from the King as his personal right the enjoyment of all the privileges granted to the Company. The King had acceded to this request, and the Duke, so it appears, promised to any one who would subscribe one-third of the expenses towards building and equipping six ships, one-third of the island as a concession in perpetuity. It had been decided to send out colonists and also a sufficiently large number of missionaries to evangelize the native population of Madagascar, reckoned to be about two million people.

The *Sieur de Flacourt* was thus faced with the choice between remaining in Fort Dauphin on behalf of the Duc de la Meilleraie, or of returning to France to plead the cause of the men who were clamouring for their wages and who, so he feared, might be tempted to sell the hides for their own profit—a loss to the Company, whose representative he still felt himself to be. He therefore decided to return to France.

Leaving the *Sieur Pronis*, who evidently enjoyed the Duke's patronage, in charge of Fort Dauphin, he left Madagascar, taking with him four young Christian Malagasy, nephews of Dian Ramaka, lads, who spoke some French, and whom on arrival in France he sent to Monsieur Vincent de Paul. He wrote concerning them: 'May it please the Divine Majesty to make of these children good Christians and true Catholics, for, if this grace be granted them, these four will suffice to convert their whole nation.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Flacourt, *Relation de la Grande Isle Madagascar*. Paris, 1658.

He himself went to make a report to the Duc de la Meilleraie, who received him most graciously. In Paris, on the other hand, he met with nothing but worry and trouble, for the former shareholders, to whom he submitted a statement of accounts for the seven years he had been out, not only considered the item 'presents for chiefs' exorbitant, but refused to repay him the wages he had advanced the men from his own pocket. Litigation became necessary, and for his loyalty to the men who had held out through all these trials, the ex-Director-General earned only abuse from the gentlemen in Paris.

While at home the Sieur de Flacourt wrote<sup>1</sup> two books on Madagascar, dedicated respectively to the Finance Minister, Fouquet, and to the Duc de la Meilleraie. The *History of the Great Island of Madagascar* contained detailed descriptions of the country, flora, fauna, of the inhabitants, their customs and habits, beliefs and superstitions, their sicknesses and remedies. The book is enriched by maps of various parts of Madagascar, as well as by a general map; there is also a detailed plan of the settlement of Fort Dauphin, showing the buildings and gardens, carefully laid out for cultivation.

The second book, a narrative in 77 chapters of all that had happened in Madagascar from 1642 to the time of his departure in 1655, the Sieur de Flacourt dedicated to the Duc de la Meilleraie 'in token of his profound gratitude for help sent him at a moment when he was despairing of all earthly succour'.

This eager pioneer of colonization did more than supply information of Madagascar, for he also explained in a separate publication the causes which had led to failure.

Personally, the Sieur de Flacourt seems to have had great faith in the possibility of making Madagascar a flourishing colony. In reading his article on 'The Advantages one may expect from it', one finds a striking resemblance to Richard Boothby and Walter Hammond's relations and praises of the Great Island.

Four years after his return to France the Sieur de Flacourt once more set out for Madagascar, a compromise having been reached between the various parties interested. This time

<sup>1</sup> Flacourt, *Relation et Histoire de la Grande Isle Madagascar*. 1658.

several missionaries were to accompany the Sieur to Madagascar. When this was known quite a large number of ecclesiastics came forward, some holding important positions. From among these volunteers six were chosen.

The party embarked at Dieppe in May 1660, but hardly had land been lost sight of, when a violent tempest compelled the vessel to seek refuge at Plymouth, where the Sieur de Flacourt was received with great honour.

After a week spent 'amidst English warships', a favourable wind having sprung up, the French ship sailed away. Ten days later, a hundred miles off Lisbon, three frigates were sighted. Suddenly one of them, flying the English flag, came close up, but when the customary exchange of courtesies had taken place, it hoisted the Crescent of Barbary, and a volley was fired broad beam. The two other ships also fired, and then began a combat of one ship against three. It is a story of heroism and courage and of deep tragedy, for, at the very moment when victory was on the side of the Christians, their powder-store exploded. The ship was torn in two, and every one on board was flung into the sea, all but sixteen young men perishing by fire or by water. The pirates picked these up. Saved from drowning by the pirates, they were sold as slaves in Algiers, whence they wrote to France, telling what had happened.

## *Chapter IV*

### THE TRAGEDY OF FORT DAUPHIN

IN July 1663 several new missionaries were sent out to Madagascar who, before leaving the homeland, paid a visit to their protector, the Duke. Among these men was a Malagasy, Nicolas (one of the four lads the Sieur de Flacourt had taken to France), who was now to work as a catechist among his own people. He was also to act as interpreter to Monsieur Etienne, Préfet Apostolique for Madagascar, and to Brother Philippe Patte, an excellent physician, who, in order to bring the Gospel to the Malagasy, had given up his practice to join the Order of the Lazarists.

The skill of this first medical missionary to Madagascar proved a great blessing to Frenchmen and natives alike, and that in many places. He accompanied the Père Etienne on all his journeys, which were many, for several of the chiefs were very friendly, and quite pleased to let their sons be instructed and baptized.

Fortunately for this group of missionaries, the commandant of Fort Dauphin, the Sieur de Chamargou, was as keen as they themselves on the evangelization of the Malagasy. As he plays so important and continuous a role in the happenings of the next few years, the verdict on his character by Monsieur Etienne is worth mentioning: 'This gallant and pious gentleman,' so he wrote, 'jealous for the glory of God, is feared in the country more than all the Frenchmen put together. He is as brave and courageous as he is ubiquitous, never sparing himself; being invariably successful in battle.'

For quite a while one of the greatest chiefs of the island, Dian Manangue, an ally, had been supplied with fire-arms to enable him to fight against his enemies. This policy was to prove fatal, for when the Malagasy perceived that the garrison was weakened by illness and famine, he turned enemy, and, in co-operation with other chiefs, made war against the French. It was therefore a great and pleasant surprise when

he announced his visit in order to conclude peace on his own and his neighbours' behalf.

Commandant and missionaries expected great things from this interview. Monsieur Etienne mentioned this to the General of the Order, in a letter which was to be despatched by a Dutch vessel due to leave within a few hours of penning these lines.<sup>1</sup> In view of what happened so soon after, this is of special interest:

'This afternoon we are expecting Dian Manangue—the most open-minded among the chiefs—if he were to follow the example of his son, who has been baptized by the late Père Bourdaise, there would be far-reaching consequences for the Faith. With his knowledge of the language he would be able to supply us with the right words which we have not yet been able to discover by ourselves to explain our Holy Mysteries. I may accompany him when he returns. I even plan a great journey of one hundred miles beyond his country, which is five days' journey from here. While visiting his son and other Christians I want to arrange for some catechist to teach the people . . .'

Dian Manangue's visit proved at first most satisfactory. Not only was peace concluded, but he promised to use his influence in favour of the French, to whom, so he declared 'he owed his exceptional position'. In return for this admission, the commandant informed the chief that he, for his part, considered him his most important ally.

It was at this juncture, when all seemed to promise for the best, that a disturbing element was introduced by the commandant, who impulsively told his guest that he could not possibly give him a more convincing proof of his confidence than by inviting him to embrace Christianity there and then.

Utterly taken by surprise, Dian Manangue declined this, as he could not give up either his wives or his customs; but he promised the fullest liberty for his children to be taught, and, should they so desire it, to be baptized. However, to reconcile his host, he offered to think matters over, and to return in two weeks to give a definite answer as to his own position.

When the appointed day arrived, and Dian Manangue did

<sup>1</sup> op. cit. p. 486. February 1664.

not appear, the Sicur de Chamargou sent him a reassuring invitation, under pretext of having to make an important communication, but when the chief arrived he was subjected to a veritable religious attack. After Monsieur Etienne had put forth argument after argument, the commandant begged his guest 'to respond to the call of the Saviour'; but all to no avail. To the Malagasy it seemed like doing violence to his conscience to send away his wives, all of whom he loved.

At this moment religious zeal outran the diplomatic sense of the commandant. Turning impetuously to the missionary he said gesticulating: 'You will never succeed in convincing this obstinate man. I shall blow out his brains.'

His friend, horrified by so utterly unchristian a suggestion, urged that 'Divine Grace should be left to do its own work'.

While this conversation was going on, Dian Manangue resolved on new tactics, the excited officer's gesture having been too unmistakable to be misread. Fearing for his safety, the staunch pagan now suddenly professed great willingness to let himself be convinced of the truth of the Christian religion. He went even so far as to fix the day for his baptism, which he wished to take place, with great solemnity, among his own people.

During these visits to Fort Dauphin, the wily chief had realized how small the garrison was; a number of men being away just then on an expedition of exploration. This seemed to him the moment for striking a fatal blow at the Europeans. His son, troubled and perplexed by his father's preoccupied manner and sinister looks, suspected treachery. He therefore sent a message to Monsieur Etienne to put off his visit, who, however, felt that if he did not keep the appointment he would fail in his part of the bargain; nor could he believe in the possibility of bad faith on the part of Dian Manangue.

Accompanied by the doctor and the interpreter, the missionary duly arrived at Dian Manangue's, who, however, point-blank declared his inability, even at the risk of displeasing the French, to forsake his faith, his wives, and his customs.

Realizing that nothing was to be gained by further arguments, Monsieur Etienne rose to depart, but the chief, with honey on his lips and venom in his heart, would not allow his visitors to do so before having partaken of a meal.

As though not able to show sufficient honours and deference to them, Dian Manangue accompanied them some way, when suddenly Philippe Patte collapsed and died. As the poison, so carefully administered in the food, had not acted within the usual time, and as both Monsieur Etienne and Nicolas seemed to be none the worse for it, the chief made a sign to his men, who clubbed the Frenchman and the Malagasy Christian to death—Madagascar's proto-martyrs.

The mask of friendship thrown off, Dian Manangue now invited the neighbouring chiefs to join him in an attack on the fort. On the other hand, the commandant, accompanied by a few soldiers and natives, started out to avenge the foul murder. But for the timely arrival of a Frenchman, La Case, to whom a large number of natives owed allegiance, the Sieur de Chamargou and his men would all have been killed.

La Case had married the daughter of the king of the province of Amboule, who, after the death of her father, became sovereign, and then made her French consort ruler in her stead. Her subjects, who loved him, gave him the name of a national hero of former days and, as 'Dian-Posse', La Case steadily gained influence and power, due to his fine understanding of Malagasy mentality. Again and again he was to prove himself the *deus ex machina* when his compatriots at Fort Dauphin were in dire straits, or faced by a calamity.

Conscious of the advantages of his unique position, he offered to conquer all Madagascar on behalf of the King of France, confident of being able to do so if, in addition to his own men, he could have five hundred soldiers. Had this offer been accepted, perhaps the fate of the colony might have been different, for by this time there were already several small settlements along the coast.

Although saved from being massacred, the Sieur de Chamargou was to pay dearly for his abortive punitive expedition, for the belief hitherto held in the invincibility of the French vanished. The garrison was harassed by a blockade and boycott; starvation was staring it in the face. To make matters worse, mutiny broke out, the exasperated men blaming the missionary for all their misery.

At his wit's end, the commandant implored one of the priests to bring the men to reason, which he succeeded in doing

by convincing them that their own evil lives were at the root of all these troubles. The arrival of La Case with 5,000 head of cattle also helped to calm their troubled minds.

However, had it not been for the unexpected arrival of reinforcements from France, the small garrison would have been massacred sooner or later. Fortunately, one of the Duc de Meilleraie's ships arrived in the nick of time to prevent such a disaster.

This was the Duke's last effort with regard to his pet scheme. He died soon after, and his son, the Duc de Mazarin, unwilling to take over the heavy liabilities of his father's Madagascar Company, ceded all his rights to the King.

Four years had passed since the tragic death of the Sicur de Flacourt, during which his influence with regard to Madagascar had been spreading. His books were widely read; his views came to be believed; so that when the moment seemed propitious for starting a new venture on that island, his suggestions and criticisms were taken into consideration.

This time it was the King himself who took the initiative, when in 1664 he decided to found a company for trading with the East, with Fort Dauphin as headquarters in those parts.

Louis XIV felt certain of succeeding in spreading the power and glory of France, as though by a magic wand. The company which was to carry the emblem of the fleur-de-lis to India was to be a grandiose undertaking, but 'by a truly royal generosity' the King was going to let his subjects create it, reserving to himself merely the honour to protect them by his power and to assist them with his means; in a word, he took upon himself the heavy charges of carrying out the scheme, but refused to benefit by its success.

Having started on his career of company promotor, Louis XIV used every possible means to float it, and this especially by widespread publicity. Colbert secured the services of the most renowned member of the Académie, François Charpentier,<sup>1</sup> who wrote an excellent prospectus in the form of a pamphlet which was sent out far and wide. After giving a masterly survey of the attempts made by various nations to trade with the East, the author most attractively described the

<sup>1</sup> François Charpentier, *Discours d'un fidèle suiet du Roy, touchant l'Etablissement d'une compagnie Française pour le Commerce des Indes Orientales*. Paris, 1664.



benefits to be expected from it by the French nation, once it had made the King's scheme its own.

The response was immediate. Merchants and statesmen met in consultation, and it was decided to send a deputation to the King to solicit his gracious sanction on the new Company; which he granted.

The Company duly constituted, the directors took steps at once to circularize all municipalities; the King for his part sending nineteen *lettres de cachet*, which set forth the benefits to be expected, no less than the duty of every loyal subject to co-operate in this magnificent enterprise.<sup>1</sup> Madagascar was to be the centre of trade with India, and Fort Dauphin the seat of the Supreme Council.

With flourish of trumpets the new Company had been inaugurated; but if glory and gain were its chief objects, moral and religious values were given almost equal importance. How pleased the Sieur de Flacourt and the Père Nacquart would have been, had they read certain clauses of the 'Statutes, Orders and Regulations', by which not only the laws of France were to be enforced, but even the unwritten laws called the 'usages of Paris', where not only the highest demands were made on every Frenchman proceeding to Madagascar, but also the interests of the islanders were considered from every point of view. Thus, it was expressly stated that it was a capital offence to sell one of them as a slave, or to trade in slaves; corporal punishment was to be the penalty for ill-treating or molesting a Malagasy. All armed expeditions against them were prohibited, as also was participation in inter-tribal warfare. Every possible effort was to be made to put an end to the custom of killing children born on unlucky days, which amounted to nearly 200 a year. Baptized Malagasy were to be reckoned as French subjects. To avoid falling victims of treachery, no parties were to leave the settlement without definite orders.

Nor was the physical welfare of the colonists overlooked. Brothers of the Order of St. John<sup>2</sup> were to be invited to go out to nurse the sick; it was prohibited to drink unboiled milk, or to eat too much of the fruits of the country on arrival;

<sup>1</sup> Du Fresné de Francheville, *Histoire de la Compagnie des Indes Orientales*. Paris, 1746.

<sup>2</sup> Founded in 1540.

all excesses were to be avoided, infection being in most cases incurable. On the other hand, marriage with native women, after instruction and baptism, was to be encouraged.

The dire consequences of the *Sieur Pronis*' ill-judged action were to be counteracted by the proclamation of the benevolent intentions of the Company by envoys who were to travel all over Madagascar. Only such means as were compatible with gentleness were to be used. It was hoped that this might be attained when it was generally known that faith would be kept, and that never again would any one of the islanders be made a slave.

All that practical advice, earnest desire to avoid mistakes of the past, foresight, and good intentions could contribute to the success of this great adventure was thus ready to hand. Yet everything depended on that unknown and incalculable quantity—the human agents, whose duty it would be to put those noble maxims into practice.

Notices were placarded on the walls of Paris concerning the great adventure, inviting men of every sort and condition to go out to Madagascar, 'where abundance reigns and fortunes can be made'.

An advance party of officials was sent to Madagascar in March 1665, with orders to take over settlements and personnel. That this could be done was due to an amicable arrangement with the shareholders of the *Duc de la Meilleraie*'s company and with his son.

The most important personage among the party was the *Sieur Pierre de Beausse*, President and Keeper of the Seal of the Supreme Council of 'La France Orientale', the official title given to Madagascar by the King. This officer, a half-brother of the late *Sieur de Flacourt*, was an amiable, learned, elderly gentleman, whose pursuit in life had been the search for the philosopher's stone. What alchemy had failed to give him, he now hoped to find in Madagascar.

Among the nine members of the Council were also four merchants, its secretary being *Monsieur Souchu de Rennefort*.<sup>1</sup> It is his narrative and the memoirs<sup>2</sup> of *François Martin*

<sup>1</sup> *Souchu de Rennefort, Relation du Premier Voyage de la Compagnie des Indes Orientales*. Paris, 1668.

<sup>2</sup> *François Martin, Memoires*, MS. Arch. Nat., Paris, also edited by A. Martineau. Paris, 1935.

which supply the text for the tragedy enacted at Fort Dauphin.

The secretary had a most difficult position, made practically impossible by the obstinacy of the president, who would not let him fulfil his duties. The *Sieur de Beausse*, ill all the time, let things go on very much as they were. The *Sieur de Chamargou*, having accepted service under the new Company, was to prove the one permanent and active executive agent.

Matters were not made easier by the strained relations between the president and *La Case*, who felt aggrieved by what he considered a slight on his wife by the former.

Five months after his arrival the elderly alchemist died, having confessed on his deathbed, in great contrition of heart, that he had come out for purely selfish motives.

Conditions were as unsatisfactory as ever; there remained the same difficulty of procuring rice and cattle, and an ever-increasing discontent among the early colonists, who, 'having lived without any moral restraint, feared the applications of the Laws and Usages of France, which made even swearing a crime'. The newcomers, again, had other grounds for complaint, for 'having expected to find an abundance of good things, they found nothing of the kind'.<sup>1</sup>

At last the Company was able to secure a fleet of ten ships to bring out a large number of colonists and soldiers to Madagascar. The King had appointed the *Marquis de Mondevergue*, a valiant and renowned soldier, as Governor-General of the islands of Madagascar and Bourbon, the latter having by now acquired a reputation for the salubrity of its climate. It was to serve as a health resort for all the sick on board ship. The *Marquis* had orders to study the potentialities of that latter island as a possible substitute for Fort Dauphin, should circumstances arise to make this measure desirable, but meanwhile to establish a colony, by organizing and developing what had so far been merely a private enterprise of one of the officers.

When this fleet arrived at Fort Dauphin the situation was once again desperate. A fatal impression was given to the large number of new colonists, who were bitterly disappointed by the contrast between expectation and actuality.

The *Marquis* represented the King, while the Company had

<sup>1</sup> *Souchu de Rennefort*, op. cit.

sent with him two business directors, Caron and Faye, to represent its interests, but who found themselves hampered in every way by the autocratic Governor-General. Accustomed to military methods, he had not much use for either business men or a council, which he hardly ever called. He ruled as seemed right in his sight, which, fortunately, was in accordance with the high ideals and noble maxims of the Rules and Ordinances.

This becomes apparent from a report sent a few years later by the *Sieur de Chamargou* to Colbert, wherein he stated: 'The peace established by the *Marquis de Mondevergue* in this island has had very good results, in so far as it has enabled the natives to cultivate their lands, which this year have produced a plentiful harvest.'<sup>1</sup>

If the natives were satisfied by the Governor-General's methods, not so the Frenchmen; but chiefly owing to differences of interests and to incompatibility of temperament.

As conditions on the spot proved to be so totally different from the statements spread and believed in France; as it was impossible to carry out the promises made in all good faith by those in authority at home, as also to make certain loans to the colonists, or to supply them with slaves to till the ground as convened, the Council, under pressure by the *Marquis*, decided to break the agreement. In order to claim compensation, certain of the leaders of the colonists returned to France, while the rest took service under the Company. 'Thus another of the schemes for populating Madagascar with colonies came to nothing.'

Matters went from bad to worse on the island. Owing to the bad state in which everything had been found—the lack of defences, the insufficient dwelling-places—carelessness increased; the Council seemed to be paralysed. The merchandise remained unprotected on the shore, as there were no warehouses to put it in. 'Canon and acres' were soon covered up by the sand and goods and provisions were washed away by the waves. Some of the 'officials' began to trade on their own account; the employees clamoured for an increase in wages. *M. Caron*, a Fleming, one of the directors, left for India, to start business on his own account in *Surat*, where one of the merchants, *M. de Faye*, joined him soon after.

<sup>1</sup> *François Martin*, op. cit.

There was ill-luck also with regard to letters and reports sent home. The ship which carried them was sunk by the English, and the captain made prisoner; the letters he was conveying to France were sent on, but were unfortunately lost on the way.

The directors were thus left in ignorance as to how matters stood in Madagascar, where desperation was getting the upper hand, especially since, locusts having destroyed the rice harvest, famine was raging in Fort Dauphin. It was therefore decided to send the secretary to France, to report personally why there was little cause for the Company to expect much from these settlements; and why the agreement with the colonists had been broken.

However, M. Souchu de Rennefort could not carry out his commission, for his ship was also captured by the English. That the young man thoroughly enjoyed his captivity on parole on the Isle of Wight, becomes evident from his narrative.

Fortunately, another envoy, whom the Marquis de Mondevergue sent to Paris, reached France. He brought with him letters from his chief, who wrote very plainly to his friends what he thought of Madagascar.

Unfortunately for the Marquis his severe criticisms came to the ears of Louis XIV, who wrote to him: 'They are discussed everywhere, in the ante-chambers of the ministers as well as in the town; so also what your envoy has been saying, that you are disappointed in Madagascar, as well as by the commerce with India. This has created a very bad impression, and if I had not upheld this settlement by my powerful protection, your twofold imprudence would have led to the abandonment of our enterprise, with the consequences that you might have been left to perish on that island without any one coming to your rescue.'<sup>1</sup>

From Surat Monsieur de Faye sent to the Minister a very outspoken report<sup>2</sup> on the condition of the colony at Fort Dauphin. He expressed his inability to understand the motives which had prevented the majority of those who had written about Madagascar from sticking more closely to the

<sup>1</sup> Lettre de Louis XIV au Marquis de Mondevergue. 19th January 1669. MS. Arch. Min. Col. Madagascar. Paris.

<sup>2</sup> M. de Faye, *Memoire sur l'etat present de l'Isle Dauphine*. 1668. MS. Arch. Min. Col. Madagascar. Paris.

truth in their descriptions. 'As to the *Sieur de Flacourt*, he may have hoped thereby to attain his end more easily—namely the conversion of the heathen, but in the case of the others it must have been by sheer levity.' *M. de Faye* goes on to state what he believes to be the causes of this utter failure: to start with, a mistaken policy; then famine, negligence, 'frequent and often protracted illnesses, which are a hindrance to carrying out one's business'. He mentioned that 'if four hundred men are wanted on the spot, at least twelve hundred should be sent out, as one-third would die, and of the survivors, half of their number would be ill'. It is this fearful mortality and the great suffering by disease which make him add 'that it would be useful were the medical men of Paris to apply themselves to discovering the cause', and he suggests: 'The Sorbonne might to good purpose send its most skilful and learned member out to Madagascar, who would find there sufficient material for study and for exercising his science.'

As an alternative to Fort Dauphin, *M. de Faye* suggested the Bay of St. Augustine, but feared that the cost of building a fort there would be prohibitive.

After the departure of the *Marquis de Mondevergue*, the *Sieur de Chamargou* was again in charge. On his behalf a *M. de Grandmaison*<sup>1</sup> wrote to Colbert to ask for arms and ammunition, and for four to five thousand soldiers to be sent out, as well as trustworthy labourers with their families; but to be sure to supply them at the same time with all necessaries. He had the courage to plead for the abolition of the Usages of Paris and for the Frenchmen a certain 'liberty in their treatment of the natives, which need in no way be violent, or tyrannical'. He also asked, because of the distance from Paris, for discretionary powers to be given to those in authority. He explained the need for officers, but who should be 'carefully chosen; men of courage, yet gentle, moderate, and capable of making themselves feared, loved, and obeyed'.

Louis XIV, beginning to feel rather nervous about Madagascar affairs, sent out Admiral de la Haye to make an inquiry into the causes of the suffering of all the Frenchmen who had been there, and at the same time to introduce the best remedies for these ills.

<sup>1</sup> *M. de Grandmaison*, 1670. MS. Arch. Miss. Col. Madagascar. Paris.

With great ceremony the Admiral, who was also appointed Viceroy of India, began his administration. But instead of following the pacific policy of his predecessor, he took it into his head to demand the submission of the chiefs and the surrender of their arms, most of which were supplied by Englishmen trading with the west coast of the island. The point-blank refusal led to a campaign, with great loss to the French, whereupon 'M. de la Haye, realizing that neither his zeal, policy nor powers would enable him to be the absolute master in the island of Madagascar, thought it wiser to leave those in command who had been so before his arrival, and to depart, before a fate like that of the Marquis de Mondevergue were to befall him'. He therefore appointed the Sieur de Chamargou commandant of the fort, and one of his officers, M. de la Bretèche, 'Major of the Island'.

The Viceroy, having, so he believed, satisfactorily arranged matters for the colony, proceeded to Bourbon, taking with him a number of colonists. That island was to become henceforth an emporium for trade with India, instead of serving merely as a sanatorium. In a long report to Colbert he explained why the King's orders respecting Madagascar could not possibly be carried out. He therefore suggested the abandonment of the several settlements on the east coast, but to found others on the west coast instead.

Pessimistic reports, the loss in life of four thousand men in these few years, the heavy expenditure, and the absence of returns for the outlay, decided the Company to withdraw completely from the island of Madagascar, which they returned to the King, as of no further use to them. The headquarters were to be at Surat, where Messrs. Caron and Faye had succeeded in establishing a factory. None of their ships were in future to call at Fort Dauphin.

What Louis XIV must have felt at this collapse of his great scheme can be imagined. Too proud to confess himself beaten, he added Madagascar to the possessions of the Crown.

The news of having been abandoned by the Company had reached Fort Dauphin. One of the missionaries, commenting on the fact of everything having been transferred 'into the hands of the King', expressed his opinion 'that the adverse reports had been inspired rather by passion and caprice and

moods, than by an actual knowledge of facts'. This led the writer to assume that 'the Company would one day repent of having lightly given up a position advantageous for their commerce . . . for the heavy initial expenses having been paid, it would have been worth their while to retain, at small cost, a colony where all their ships could find refreshment and any help required. . . .'<sup>1</sup> He added: 'One does not yet know whether the King is also going to abandon this enterprise; that will depend upon the reports of those whom he will send out to enquire.'

This state of uncertainty was a great trial to the missionaries, who had been carrying on their labours under great difficulties.

In spite of the difficulties, there had been steady work, thousands of Malagasy having been baptized. But owing to the latest troubles a standstill had set in, yet even at this critical moment twenty scholars were still in the boarding schools. The one for girls was in the charge of a Malagasy woman,<sup>2</sup> who, before she had been baptized, had lived with a Frenchman. After his death she had become a Sister of Charity, the first and only Malagasy woman to wear the habit of that Order, which Monsieur Vincent de Paul had founded as a counterpart to the Brotherhood of the Lazarists.

It becomes evident from a letter, dated October 1671, that the position was exceedingly precarious, the *Sieur de Chamargou* having no munitions; and once again *Dian Manangue* was looming large. 'The most sinister man I have ever seen'; so wrote the *Père Roquet*, adding: 'It costs him something to pay us a visit. I saw that it hurt him when some one mentioned Monsieur Etienne; also he stopped his son from speaking to us in French.'

At this juncture the devout *Sieur de Chamargou* died, and Monsieur de la Bretèche found himself in charge of Fort Dauphin. Illness and hunger were raging, and so reduced was the garrison, that its resistance to the natives for any length of time was impossible. What made matters still more hopeless was the knowledge that no human succour could be expected.

The fact that Madagascar had been given up by the Company, the danger this abandonment entailed for the colony,

<sup>1</sup> *Memoires de la Congregation*, op. cit. p. 577.

<sup>2</sup> op. cit. p. 580.



as well as the apparent impossibility of continuing missionary work, decided the Superior of the Order to recall the six valiant men. Orders to this effect<sup>1</sup> were sent by the ship *Dunkerquoise*.

It is a strange coincidence that on 28th February 1671 two letters were penned, one in Madagascar, the other in Paris, telling the same pitiful news of a forsaken and desperate handful of men. The young governor of the colony wrote to Colbert a rapid survey of conditions: danger threatened from the Malagasy, 'a nation naturally inclined to treachery', demanding a perpetual watchfulness, causing an inexpressible fatigue to the twenty-six persons in all, of which half are unable to do anything, the rest composed of mutineers and good-for-nothings'.

Once again overdue salaries were demanded by a mutinous soldiery. Once again the priest had to step in, but nothing was promised *him*, unless he himself would proceed to Paris to return with the money due to them. M. de la Bretèche mentioned that he had just escaped being killed by his men in an ambush, and tells of the league made by a tribe believed to be friends with Dian Manangue, who had bought arms and powder at Cap St. Augustine. Fortunately, an expedition had proved successful: the natives were suing for peace.

That this was but a lull before the storm the colonists realized. They therefore addressed a memorial to the King, which the recalled missionaries were to hand to Colbert.

On that very same day, 28th February 1671, the new Superior of the Order of the Lazarists addressed a letter to the Company to express his anxiety about the six missionaries.

Even the optimistic Louis XIV had by now given up hope of finding in Madagascar an El Dorado, while the island of Bourbon assumed increasing importance in his eyes. His fatherly care towards the colonists settled at Port St. Charles led him to despatch, as prospective wives for the colonists, fifteen young orphans. Chosen for their charm from among the inmates of an orphanage under the patronage of devout society ladies, these girls of fifteen to seventeen years were entrusted to the care of a nun, Mademoiselle de la Ferriere, and of a priest. They were put on board the *Dunkerquoise*,

<sup>1</sup> Circulaire du Decembre 10 1671, op. cit., 582.

whose captain had strict orders to see to their safety and welfare and to take them to Bourbon. After a journey of ten months he appeared with his ship before Fort Dauphin.

He informed the Governor that the King, also, had given up Madagascar; that henceforth vessels would not visit Fort Dauphin on their way to Surat, but only the island of Ste Marie. A settlement had existed there for some time, started by a French officer, who had married the daughter of the ruler of Tintingue.

The captain brought a letter ordering the missionaries to leave by this ship, while the desperate colonists begged them not to forsake them.

There were still other desperate persons, namely the prospective wives, who were almost demented by the brutality of the captain. When put on shore for a while, six of them fled into the woods. When they were brought back by a search-party a new complication arose, for the captain refused to take them to Bourbon. They were left on the hands of the Governor.

These were terrible days for the poor colonists, for if ever there was a fiend, it was this captain, who intended to get great gain out of their need and misery. As sixteen maidens and one priest were not sufficient cargo for a ship, the captain had been permitted (through the King's ship) to take out merchandise to trade on his own behalf. When he realized the dire plight of the men at Fort Dauphin, and their utter lack of everything, greed made him demand such exorbitant prices that no one could pay. He tortured the poor starved men by threatening to leave the port, till they were brought to the pitch of offering their very last sous, if only he would reduce his prices, which he refused to do. On the day fixed for his departure, the ship duly sailed out into the roads, with missionaries and ten maidens on board—but a storm broke out which flung the ship on the rocks, where it foundered. The passengers were fortunately put on shore before this happened.

In this case the ill wind blew good for the colonists, for, the cargo being salvaged, the captain had to let it go for what he could get. If hereby that question was momentarily satisfactorily settled, the presence of the stranded maidens was causing

the Governor many anxious hours. In a letter<sup>1</sup> to Colbert he related afterwards what happened; how, conscious of their danger, these girls had begged him to marry them quickly to his men, while he, knowing they were destined for Bourbon, dared not go against orders. It was when they urged that, once married, their husbands might become colonists on that island, supported in this decision by the priest, he had given way.

Six months had passed since that shipwreck, and just when these several weddings were to take place the *Blanc Pignon*, on its way to Surat, appeared before Fort Dauphin.

What comfort it was for the Governor to hear from the captain that it was not true that the King had also forsaken them, can be imagined. Was his presence there not proof positive of this?—so he assured his host. But apparently it was illness on board his ship which made the captain touch at Fort Dauphin, orders having been to proceed direct to Surat. Whatever the reason, here he was, and in the very nick of time, as the events of the next days proved.

These moments of respite and calm were made use of to celebrate the weddings of five of the maidens, the others to wait another week.

Commandant, priest, missionaries, and prospective husbands had, however, reckoned without their hosts—namely the Malagasy women, whose jealousy had been roused by the arrival of the young girls. They had been assured that these were destined for Bourbon—yet marriages took place, and more were to be solemnized within a few days!

The idea that henceforth more and more European women might come to oust them out of their position and rob them of their beloved white lovers was unbearable. Vengeance was vowed on all Frenchmen. The Malagasy ladies, infuriated, believing themselves betrayed, ordered their slaves to kill the faithless Frenchmen.

How exactly everything happened has never been ascertained, but five days after the first weddings had taken place the commandant, who lived some miles away from the fort, learnt the terrible news that in one night seventy-five French living outside the fort had been massacred, among them two

<sup>1</sup> M. de la Bretèche à M. de Colbert, 1675. MS. Arch. Min. Col. Madagascar. Paris.

of the missionaries. Only one of the newly married couples escaped, the other young wives perishing with their husbands.

Fortunately, the *Blanc Pignon* was still before Fort Dauphin. Terror-stricken, fearing to be massacred next, the survivors implored the commandant to take them away by that ship as quickly as possible. What could the poor harassed man do but comply? After having taken on board as much of the stores as was possible, he set fire to the rest, and, having spiked the guns, he joined the distraught party. His wife and her sister, those daughters of a Malagasy queen, left Madagascar with him to start out on a dreary, weary odyssey.

Soon after, Admiral de la Haye revisited Fort Dauphin. What must his feelings have been when he beheld those signs of disaster. Not one Frenchman to be seen! Those spiked cannon! What did it all mean?

The natives had a plausible answer ready—‘A Dutch fleet’, so they informed him, ‘had suddenly attacked the settlement, and after destroying everything, had carried one and all into captivity.’<sup>1</sup>

With a very sad and heavy heart the admiral set sail for France.

Meanwhile, the remnant of the colony were sailing on the seas to what they hoped would be a place of safety. Alas! Their hopes were not to be realized. It has never been discovered why the captain of the *Blanc Pignon*, instead of making straight for Bourbon, sailed for Mozambique, which, owing to contrary winds, it took him seven months to reach. More than half of the sixty-eight passengers died during the voyage, while the others, after very bad experiences at Mozambique, and many other trials, finally reached the coast of Malabar.

From here M. de la Bretèche wrote to Colbert two letters, telling all that had happened at Fort Dauphin, since that fatal cargo of sixteen French maidens had been landed there. He mentioned that two only had reached their original place of destination—Bourbon, as one of the young husbands, having luckily escaped being massacred, had managed to save his wife and her sister.

It was not until three years later that two of the surviving missionaries returned to France via India. They were the last

<sup>1</sup> Louis Guet, *Les origines de l'Isle de Bourbon*.

of that devoted band of men who, in the course of twenty-five years, had laboured among the Malagasy, forty-five of their number having laid down their lives in Madagascar, and apparently all to no purpose.

That massacre seemed the death knell to nascent Christianity. The darkness of heathendom once again settled on those who for a while had been considered the first-fruits of a coming harvest.

Thus ended in blood, sorrow, and disappointment an enterprise which had been so dear to the heart of Louis XIV, and so full of promise to Monsieur Vincent de Paul.

## Chapter V

### ATTEMPTS AT COLONIZATION

IF Madagascar had lost interest for the kings of England and France and the great trading companies, it had not, however, for a variety of private individuals who in the course of the last decade of the seventeenth century were to give it a sinister reputation.

The French settlers on the east coast heard rumours of white men living in the interior—mostly shipwrecked sailors<sup>1</sup> or stragglers of parties sent ashore, who, captured and carried inland, were appreciated by the Malagasy kinglets as military leaders in their perpetual inter-tribal warfare.

There were, however, still other Europeans in Madagascar, to whom this island on the route to India was of immense importance. Creeks, bays, and islands offered shelter from prying eyes, and here those vultures of the sea, pirates, had their headquarters. Outlaws of society, but law-abiding members of the commonwealth they themselves founded, these men of all nationalities lived here in organized communities, in good understanding with the natives—but a terror to those whom they met at sea.

Madagascar, so exceptionally favourably situated for intercepting merchant vessels, was an excellent base for raids into the Arabian Sea, the coast of Malabar, and the Malay Archipelago.

The bays of St. Augustine and Antongil were neutral ports of call, as also the Comoro Islands; the latter much frequented by the English pirates, because favoured by their inhabitants, while those of the island of Ste Marie favoured the French.

Between the years 1668 and 1688 there had been a lull in piracy, but then there was such a revival of this curse of commerce that the governors of the various East India companies

<sup>1</sup> *Madagascar: Robert Drury's Journal during Fifteen Years of Captivity in that Island.* London, 1719.

began to be seriously perturbed, their shareholders appealing for protection of their capital.

For thirty years Madagascar was the headquarters for at least fifteen famous English pirates, men whose names have become household words,<sup>1</sup> such as Captains Kidd, Tew, and Avery; the latter had captured so many ships that his very success proved a danger, as so great a pirate fleet was too much exposed to attack. Captain Avery and his companions realized that they were running the risk of being murdered for their enormous wealth, 'gotten at such hazard'.<sup>2</sup> A consultation was held as to where a safe place could be found to enjoy the benefit of their riches. An old seaman suggested Madagascar, which he described in glowing colours as a spot where one might live undisturbed and in comfort 'until some way was discovered how to return to ordinary life in the homeland'. It was decided to set sail for that island, and, in order to let the other ships (which had absented themselves to make raids) know where to find the captain, a notice-board of lead was set up on a rock on Point St. Julien with this inscription: 'Gone to Madagascar. Dec. 10th, 1692.'<sup>3</sup>

Till the captain reached that island he had met with nothing but success, scarce knowing what it was to be disappointed. But once again the rocks and reefs and storms around Madagascar were to prove fatal, and 'the most fortunate ship that ever man sailed was lost'. Fortunately, guns, ammunition, gold, and jewels were salvaged, and, as true philosophers, the crew built a town, which the gunner, an excellent engineer, fortified according to rule, with pallisades, ditches, and batteries with twenty-four cannon. As this settlement was on an island the pirates hoped to be able to resist any attack.

One day a ship was sighted, which proved to be the frigate with the comrades for whose benefit the notice-board had been set up at Point St. Julien, who, on reading the message, although two years had passed since then, set sail for Madagascar.

These lucky pirates settled in Madagascar, there to enjoy

<sup>1</sup> *A General History of the Pirates*, Captain Charles Johnson. London, 1724.

<sup>2</sup> *Captain Avery, the King of the Pirates* (two letters by himself). London, 1720.

<sup>3</sup> Captain Avery has himself related the story of his exploits in the Indian Ocean, and how he and his companions 'revelled in a bottomless sea of riches'. Captain Avery, *op. cit.*

themselves in security. Their fame of being the most terrible pirates spread far and wide, and, given a bad name, there was nothing else to do but to live up to it, and when not roaming the sea, a terror to merchantmen, they lived in Madagascar.

On the other hand, to quote the captain's letter, 'None of the English or Dutch ships would come near Madagascar if they could help it.'

At the close of the seventeenth century the small island of Ste Marie, off the east coast of Madagascar, assumed great importance in the eyes of merchants from all over the world, because the headquarters of the pirates, ships visited that island 'from New York, and other places of New Holland and the Bermudas'.

A Dutch captain who mentions these facts describes at the same time, in glowing colours, all the excellent points of the natural harbour of Ste Marie, 'which required no fortifications, as its entrance is not larger than a bullet carries; some fifty cannon placed by the pirates on and behind rocks being sufficient protection'.

To the captain, Madagascar appeared a most desirable country, and that not only for its situation, but for its gold, its mineral wealth, its timber for ship-building, its medicinal herbs, its perfumed plants, its honey—which he considered 'the best in the world'.

If Madagascar seemed so desirable a country to the captain, not so to the pirates. To them it had become a prison, for, so they argued, Madagascar is in fact an excellent base whence to carry out piracy, but certainly not a paradise in which to end one's days. What, after all, is the good of having wealth untold if there is not possibility of enjoying it in the homeland?

True, there had been the possibility of leaving it when the English Government had sent, between the years 1699 and 1705, at three different times, fleets to offer an amnesty to all pirates who would promise to abandon their evil ways—but, if not, 'they would be ruthlessly exterminated'. That amnesty was not generally accepted, because Captain Kidd's men had been executed in spite of this promise.

A great despair was taking hold of these men who had chosen piracy as a means to an end. Their wealth might buy them at least their deliverance from this existence, so they argued.



They therefore sought for means of escaping from Madagascar, and in the hope of regaining their liberty of movement they grasped at every chance offered them. Their representatives and friends in Europe in vain appealed on their behalf to various sovereigns, while the Kings of France and Denmark turned a deaf ear.

Charles XII of Sweden was very willing to make use of the offer made on behalf of the pirates by a Welshman—to supply him with ships and money, if only he would take them under his protection. This scheme, however, did not succeed.

Peter the Great, having heard of the plight of the pirates, and utterly mistaken in what was really the case, decided to send out two frigates, then at anchor at Reval, to be fitted out within ten days to proceed in the greatest secrecy to Madagascar. He himself drew up and then corrected the instructions for the captain.<sup>1</sup>

He wrote a letter, dated 1723, to 'the King of Madagascar', and signed it 'Your cousin Peter'. He recommended his officers to the King's kind favour and asked for facilities for them to circulate freely within his realm. In a second letter, addressed to 'the most mighty King, Sovereign of Madagascar', the Tsar explains that having heard of the King's appeal for protection to the late King of Sweden, he now offered to give to him and to as many of his subjects as might like to follow him, protection against all adversaries and a refuge in any province of his empire he might like to select.

Fate, however, was against this enterprisc, for while still in the harbour the ships became unseaworthy, and the Tsar decided to await a more favourable moment for sending a fleet.<sup>2</sup>

There must have been much coming and going at Ste Marie. An English captain records having on board fifty-seven passengers, of whom twenty-four were to be landed at Fort Dauphin, there to buy slaves<sup>3</sup> and pigs; the rest were bound for America, trade between Madagascar and America being flourishing. A

<sup>1</sup> The original document with corrections in the Tsar's handwriting is in the MS. Dept. of the British Museum, Add. MS.

<sup>2</sup> Vice-Admiral Veselago, *The History of the Russian Navy*. St. Petersburg, 1875, pp. 396-400.

<sup>3</sup> According to native custom all captives of war became the property of the victorious chief. The pirates were the first to introduce the export trade of Malagasy.

letter written from Philadelphia to the custom officials in England states that 'Here in Pennsylvania one thinks of nothing but trading with Madagascar in order to get rich; the merchants in New York have made their fortune by it.' The writer mentioned three ships being due to leave New York for Madagascar *via* Madeira, where wines and brandy will be taken on board to be sold to the pirates, from whom their treasures can be bought very cheaply. Evidently the pirates themselves brought their booty to New York, for, so he writes, 'certain of the Madagascar pirates are expected here at any moment'.

The strategic importance of the Ile de Ste Marie had also come to the notice of a certain *Sieur de la Merveille*. The pirates living there explained to him that they had chosen it as their headquarters because it was so excellent a base for trade and piracy. The *Sieur*, for his part, was impressed by the fact that twenty ships could easily find shelter in the harbour at one time. In his report he wrote that this island with its six hundred natives, its four hundred pirates, was especially suitable for founding a colony. He hoped the King would do so, and in his eagerness to see his scheme successfully carried out he offered himself as interpreter, because 'proficient in the English language'.

Although Madagascar had lost all attraction for the King of France, this great island was acquiring increasing importance for the two islands, Bourbon and Mauritius. This latter island had been given up by the Dutch for reasons never fully ascertained. It was said that rats or monkeys, or both, had made existence impossible. Having thus become a no-man's-land, it was taken in 1715 by order of Louis XV, and re-christened Ile de France. With its excellent harbours, which Bourbon completely lacked, this island was a most valuable acquisition, with every possibility of becoming a flourishing colony. Both islands, however, depended for their provisioning of meat on Madagascar, where at the time nothing was being done to recommence colonization. Some private individuals only carrying on trade, till, for the sake of securing a regular supply of provisions, the Governor of Bourbon found it necessary to send an accredited agent to Fort Dauphin with a few men to assist him; butchers and other workmen.

Meanwhile, reports on the desirability of reoccupying Madagascar were again and again submitted to the King and his Ministers, in which the island of Ste Marie was put forth as the most desirable site for a settlement.

There is a very marked advance in these reports from those of centuries earlier, with regard to the policy to be pursued, if trade was to be successful.

By the middle of the eighteenth century the desirability of a settlement on the Ile de Ste Marie for strategic reasons seemed of primary importance to certain officers in Bourbon. They therefore sent a memorial to Paris, in which they pointed out that in the next war with England she would be certain to try to take the Ile de France. If this were to happen, then France would not have a single place in those waters to withdraw her fleet to. The report further stated: 'The island of Bourbon is difficult to take, owing to its situation, but it has no harbour. Once the Ile de France is in the hands of the English, all possibility of further warfare is excluded, as that island controls the entrance to these waters; we would be cut off from all supplies of arms and munitions. If, however, we hold the island of Ste Marie, the occupation of Mauritius by the enemy would not have the same fatal consequences. We would still possess a harbour which, into the bargain, is so hidden that instead of sending a fleet from France, it could sail from Madagascar to succour Mauritius. This would have the additional advantage that great operations could be carried out before anything was known of it in Europe.'

These two military men were, however, also Christian gentlemen with warm hearts; therefore, apart from the strategic value of the possession of that island off the coast of Madagascar, they enumerated the moral and physical benefits the natives would derive. Missionaries should be sent out—so it was suggested—'to spread the light of the Gospel, to nurse the sick, and to save multitudes of innocent babes from death, because born on unlucky days, or because their mothers had suffered more than usual in giving them birth'.

In order to possess the island one had but to buy it from the King of Foulpointe, who had offered to sell as much of it as was wanted.

As it happened, there was after all no need to buy it, and the

excellent and far-seeing proposal of these gentlemen was suddenly given the chance of being carried out. That chief having died, his daughter Beti, who succeeded him as a ruler, decided to make a gift of it to the King of France. This valuable present was accepted by the Governor of Bourbon on behalf of His Majesty in 1750.

To this gentleman, however, its chief interest was not the strategic importance, but the immediate possibility of procuring good salted meat by having a settlement there for this purpose.

The act of taking possession of the island of Ste Marie was to be an impressive ceremony; therefore the deed of gift was signed with much solemnity. This document might have been edited by a king of the Medes and Persians, for not only did the Queen address it to all her own subjects, but 'to all the nations of the world who have or may have commercial dealings with Madagascar', who were to know 'that henceforth the island belonged for ever to the King of France to serve the commerce of the Company'.

The supremacy of French influence on this part of the east coast of Madagascar was thus duly established; a fact corroborated by an English admiral who visited the Bay of Antongil with a view to finding a substitute for that of St. Augustine, where the inhabitants were asking exorbitant prices. He hoped to find another port, where long-standing traffic with Europeans had not yet spoilt the people. In his report the admiral mentioned having met at the Bay of Antongil the children of Captain Tew the pirate, and of a Malagasy princess.

Marriages between Malagasy princesses and Frenchmen were quite a common occurrence by this time. Queen Beti had married a Corporal la Bigorne, who ruled on her behalf for sixteen years, and his authority was recognized from Tamatave to the Bay of Antongil.

In 1765 Diderot and d'Alembert had published the ninth volume of their famous encyclopaedia, in which, under the letter M, a paragraph on Madagascar appeared, which, apart from the barest geographical fact, stated that this island, watered by a hundred rivers, contains a prodigious quantity of cattle, of sheep with fat tails almost touching the ground,

and that sea, rivers and ponds swarm with fish. The learned encyclopaedist permits himself a somewhat sarcastic comment: 'Flacourt has given us the natural history of this island, which he was not in a position to know, while Rennefort has written its romance. In fact, no one has yet either penetrated far enough into this vast country, nor have sufficient attempts been made to describe it.'

The writer of this paragraph, not having read those numerous reports sent to kings and ministers, had contented himself, evidently, with the only books on Madagascar published in Paris; hence his scathing criticism. But if he questioned the accuracy of the *Sieur de Flacourt's* statements, not so the Count Laurent Fedherbe de Maudave,<sup>1</sup> who found them reliable, being able to verify them on the spot a hundred years after they had been published.

To the long list of men whom Madagascar had fascinated, the name of this gallant gentleman has to be added. However, unlike the others, whose reports and memoranda lay unheeded in Paris in the Archives of the Ministry of the Navy, he had the happiness of being sent out by the King to put into practice all their desiderata, to which he had added some peculiarly his own.

This 'Commander of Madagascar on behalf of the King', under which title he was given his chance, had been born in 1725.

In 1756 he went to India as A.D.C. to Lt.-General Lally de Tollendal. This son of an Irishman, who had gone into voluntary exile with James II, hated England from loyalty to the Stuarts. Having in vain tried to stir up Russia against that country, he chose by preference to fight against the English at the coast of Coromandel.<sup>2</sup> Under this leader the Count de Maudave participated in the siege of Madras and of Fort St. David.

It was Maudave who captured the towns of Sadras<sup>3</sup> and Cuddalore, where, thanks to the measures he had taken, all was carried sword in hand.<sup>4</sup>

Raised to the rank of colonel, Maudave was appointed

<sup>1</sup> In the French edition a chapter of 20 pages is devoted to de Maudave's enterprise.

<sup>2</sup> S. C. Hill, *Yusuf Khan, the Rebel Commandant*, p. 88. London, 1911.

<sup>3</sup> MSS. 1763, No. 26., MS. Museum Paris.

<sup>4</sup> Orme MSS., vol. lii, pp. 169, 172. India Office.

Commandant<sup>1</sup> of Sadras. Between battles and sieges this gallant officer found time to woo and to win the daughter of the Commandant of Karikal, who brought him a large fortune. General Lally attended the wedding, which took place in 1758 at Pondichery, and signed his name in the register as a witness.

Soon after, the young couple left India for the Ile de France, where Maudave served as an officer.

When news reached Maudave that his father-in-law's property had been destroyed by the English, he decided to return to India. The Government at the Ile de France gave him a commission which, in the usual formula of those days, ordered him to cause as much harm to the enemy as possible. This he succeeded in doing, especially by upholding the rebel Khan of Madura against the English.

The siege of Madura belongs to the history of the British in India, where at that moment the Count de Maudave was the one and last active French opponent, by upholding the King of Madura even after war had come to an end.

Maudave left India for the Ile de France in March 1764. In a letter to the Duc de Choiseul<sup>2</sup> he explained his action and reported on the siege of Madura, 'which cost the English twenty-seven millions in our money'. He admitted having made war since peace had been signed, but this merely to keep faith with Yusuf Khan—'in strict observance of a legitimate defence and after having exhausted all means of persuading the English, to make use of the path of gentleness and conciliation'.

He felt sure the Minister would recognize that, whatever charges the English might bring against him, it would have been impossible for him to act otherwise, and that therefore he would protect and justify him should any complaint reach Paris via London.<sup>3</sup>

His experiences in India influenced his whole outlook on life; for a keen patriot, Maudave could not settle down merely to cultivate coffee plants. His one preoccupation was to discover the means by which to enable France to regain her lost

<sup>1</sup> S. C. Hill, *Yusuf Khan*. London, 1919. Orme MS. vol. 32. London, 1919.

<sup>2</sup> MS. Arch. Min. Col. Cor. Gen. April 20 1764.

<sup>3</sup> S. C. Hill, *op. cit.* p. 249. The author mentions not having found any serious complaints of Maudave's behaviour having been sent to England.

position in these seas. At last he believed he had found what he was after. The solution of his problem lay in Madagascar.

The Count visited that island three times. At Fort Dauphin he stayed with the Chevalier de Valgny, who was only too delighted to impart his views on the strategical importance of the islands of Ste Marie and Madagascar to so sympathetic a listener. For the Chevalier the only way to revive the commerce and the navy of France was a new settlement in this France Orientale. He had expressed his fear to the King in his report lest some other European Power, for instance Austria, might have her attention drawn to Madagascar and to the facility with which this island could be acquired, which might provide, even in a larger measure, everything India supplied.<sup>1</sup>

Maudave listened, saw for himself, and at the Ile de France studied what reports he could find on Madagascar. He finally decided to go to Paris to put the scheme evolved by him before the King. He knew himself backed by both the Governor, M. Dumas, and by the Intendant of the King, M. Poivre.<sup>2</sup>

In Paris, Maudave received a warm welcome from the Duc de Praslin, a friend of his family. The Duke, who was a relation of the Duc de Choiseul, was most pleased to introduce Maudave to the Minister, who, on the strength of this recommendation, was glad to attach him to the Ministry of the Navy, where he was appointed to the department dealing with the affairs of the Ile de France and of Bourbon.

He lost no opportunity of putting his various schemes for the benefit of France in the East before the authorities.<sup>3</sup>

The moment was propitious for putting his scheme for Madagascar before the Minister. By the Treaty of Paris France had definitely lost her Indian possessions, whereby the importance of Madagascar and the two islands, which the Crown had taken back from the Company, had become enhanced. 'Choiseul hoped that France would regain some, if but part, of her lost power in the East by an occupation of Madagascar.'<sup>4</sup> The very opinion Maudave held, whose

<sup>1</sup> Au Roy, 1722. MS., *Depot de fortification. Madagascar et l'Isle Ste Marie*. Arch. Min. Col. Paris.

<sup>2</sup> Lettre de M. Boucher Desforges. 1767.

<sup>3</sup> *Memoire pour la Compagnie des Indes remis a l'Administration par M. de Maudave, le 21/7/1767*. Arch. Min. Col. Depot des fortifications Ste Marie et Madagascar, No. 12.

<sup>4</sup> S. Saintoyant, *La Colonization Française sous l'Ancien Régime*. T. II, Paris, 1929.

views, imparted to the Duc de Praslin, reached the Duc de Choiseul.

The Count explained his scheme with an enthusiasm which was infectious. He saw visions and held, as he described them, wide views, which could easily be carried out, though by a totally different policy from that formerly pursued. If the Sicur de Flacourt had believed fire and sword to be the means for spreading the prestige and power of France in Madagascar, he himself believed in a pacific and progressive occupation.

It was therefore a tremendous joy to him to be invited by the Duc de Praslin<sup>1</sup> to submit a detailed plan of his scheme. The patriot in him made him write: 'Its success will add lustre to your department, will make good our losses, will safeguard our commerce with the Indies and will put us in a position one day to get even with our enemies.'

In his eyes the interests of Madagascar and those of the Ile de France were closely allied—the latter to be made a strategical stronghold by great fortifications, the former to be the centre of production for all those necessities of life hitherto drawn from Batavia. An imperialist, he believed in the independence of a French colony from foreign imports, while at the same time developing commerce in every way, which could be achieved only if there was a strong navy to protect it. He felt convinced that by carrying out his scheme, the Minister would help to bring about all these desiderata.

The Count held very high ideals with regard to Madagascar, which he was eager to put into practice; therefore he wrote: 'To found a colony is not the sole object of this enterprise. Our purpose should be to introduce law and order among a great people, to direct it in its labours, to associate it with ours, to impart to it our customs and laws, as also our wants. Colonizing is a political mission which should spread its roots by bringing civilization into a land which has none, but which is anxious to have it. It is therefore imperative that every colonist, whatever his particular work, and even every soldier, should be considered a kind of apostle, who, by the example of their labour, by the regulations of a good police, would teach the value and power of the advantages of a well-ordered society.'

With a free and eager heart the Count wrote his report on

<sup>1</sup> The chocolates called pralines owe their name to this Minister.



the proposed enterprise, stating clearly what was to be expected from it<sup>1</sup> and what he reckoned the cost would be. In an accompanying letter addressed to another official, the personal aspect is frankly stated: 'I think it is hardly necessary for me to emphasize my request to be put in charge of these operations.'

Maudave's hopes were not disappointed. The Minister accepted his proposals and his estimates without reserve.

Maudave realized, however, that unless seconded by duly qualified men, he would not be able to achieve his end. He therefore submitted to the Duke a list of certain gentlemen he desired to have as collaborators, one and all picked men, experts in their several branches.

Foreseeing difficulties in recruiting artisans and mechanics, who would demand a guarantee of being able to make a livelihood in Madagascar, the Count asked for them travelling facilities and an advance in payment. As an alternative and an economy, he suggested that in future artisans and workmen should be enlisted as soldiers, and sent out to the Ile de France, there to be transferred to 'the Madagascar Legion'. He assured the Minister that such a corps could be easily formed, especially as a friend of his, who had lived in Madagascar, offered to raise it on the usual conditions.

With regard to the benefits to be expected, the Count pointed out that he merely offered a synthesis of the most practical points out of all the other reports: thus Madagascar was to be purveyor of food, not merely for the two colonies, but to the comptoirs in India and for all the ships. For this purpose there should be the systematic cultivation of cereals and breeding of cattle. Equally necessary would be the cultivation of the natural produce useful for trade, such as cotton, indigo, sugar cane, silk, wax, and flax—the manufacture of the latter to provide the navy in the Indian Seas with ropes and sails.

Maudave foresaw great gain to be derived by the supersession of French sailors by Malagasy. He was convinced that their young men would come forward in large numbers to serve on French ships, if assured of good treatment and the right to return to their own country.

To this man, to whom it was natural to take the high view of things, the very basis of his scheme was the prohibition of

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from E. Daubigny, *Choiseul et la France d'outre mer*. Note, p. 133.

slavery, which was not to be tolerated under any form whatever. He therefore made the abolition of the slave trade a *sine qua non*, and in order to be able to enforce this he asked the King for authority to prevent any ship occupied in this trade from touching at Madagascar.

Having studied what the Sieur de Flacourt had written with regard to the alleged readiness of the Malagasy to accept Christianity, Maudave saw in it a valuable asset for the reconciliation of that nation with the French. He therefore asked that some priests be sent out, 'open-minded, learned, and inspired by good intentions, who by the power of the spoken word will extend our domination'.

This domination was for him merely the right to lead a people with great potentialities for civilization, among whom the rudiments of all arts and crafts were found, merely waiting to be developed.

As to the financial gain of his scheme, that would be assured within twenty-five years, when, so he predicted, Madagascar could buy from France 8,000 tons of merchandise, to be paid for in native products. He quoted the success of the English in India, who owed to the assistance derived from Surat and Bengal, 'that the National Debt had not crushed them'. Even more tangible benefits he expected for France once Madagascar was really what he anticipated. He asked for a credit—sixty thousand francs.

His scheme was adopted by the Duc de Choiseul, who promised to send as soon as possible all the men and material asked for. Full of hope, the Count de Maudave, appointed Commander on behalf of the King of the island of Madagascar, left France with some personal friends and several collaborators chosen by the Ministers.

After a journey of a hundred and thirty-four days the party reached the Ile de France, where a warm welcome was given it by the Governor and by the Intendant. The former wrote to the Minister that the Count's scheme was generally favoured by every one. The only point of divergence was the choice of place where to start the settlement. While Maudave thought Fort Dauphin best, M. Dumas preferred it to be made straight away in the centre of the country, as more suitable to give the Count's gift 'of captivating and seducing the people' a chance.

'It is from there that he will easily extend his discoveries of all parts and open communications to the western coast. A settlement in the centre of Madagascar can grow strong without its progress being observed, while the coasts are to be visited by our traders only.'

M. Poivre, the Intendant, also wrote to the Duke on the subject,<sup>1</sup> but he was less optimistic than the Count. 'The objects of commerce and products for trade with India are as yet existing in imagination only, because to reap the expected advantages at least half a century would have to pass, while on the other hand the political advantages of the Madagascar settlement seem more immediate and actual.

'If by virtue of example of a wise government, especially by religion, we can attract to ourselves the natives of Madagascar and so to say, francisize them, then his enterprise will supply us with great strength, sailors, and soldiers whom we can take to India, where we then might compel the British to make place for us. . . . An undertaking founded on the above-mentioned principles, although not demanding a great expenditure, requires great skill, much constancy and blameless conduct. M. de Maudave, who is imbued with these principles, deserves the confidence which you have given him by sending him out to lay the foundations of this edifice. His enthusiasm makes him much more suitable than any other man to carry out the scheme he has himself conceived. Certainly he will have to overcome great difficulties. Fortunately for him he does not foresee any, while I know enough of Madagascar and of the character of the natives. . . .'

M. Poivre also expressed his conviction that the money should be spent rather on the Ile de France, which must be the centre of military strength, 'while the conquest M. de Maudave is setting out to make is to be by persuasion'.

Under such happy auspices the Count de Maudave left for Madagascar with a small force of fifty soldiers. He took with him his collaborators from France, their number having been swelled by those gentlemen for whom he had asked and who were living in the Ile de France; all eager to do their part in this noble and patriotic enterprise.

If his policy of pacific penetration by means of winning

<sup>1</sup> 29th July 1768. M. Poivre to the Duc de Praslin.

confidence was to succeed, the first thing to do was to proclaim it. Maudave therefore let it be known far and wide that His Majesty the King of France offered his protection to all chiefs ready to live in good understanding with the French. The message ran thus: 'We do not desire to acquire anything at your loss. We wish to live in peace with you and to trade with you.' He made it plain that the settlement he had come to establish would be to their advantage; that humane and benevolent principles would be the basis of his behaviour towards one and all.

This frank declaration, and the small number of his soldiers, had the desired effect.

In his diary,<sup>1</sup> begun the very day of his arrival, Maudave notes day by day everything that happened. In spontaneous simplicity he wrote straight from his heart. There is joy and satisfaction in the account of the large area of land ceded him by the leading chief, and this at the cost of just a red cloak with silver braid, a large hat, and the rest accordingly.

There is such genuine pleasure in Maudave's entry that this chief declares himself and his heirs henceforth no longer Malagasy, but Frenchmen, and that should the English make any attempt to trouble the settlement, the French could dispose of him, his followers, and all his possessions.

Maudave found the *Sieur de Flacourt* a trustworthy author, of whom he wrote: 'The more I study this land and people, the more fully do I realize how true and wise his statements are: a testimony which I render him with sincere pleasure.' Again and again the entry concerning customs, etc., in the diary is merely: 'All these details are explained by Flacourt. I shall not repeat them here.' The Count made several journeys inland to study the country, Flacourt's book in hand.

While he was busy in receiving chiefs and making alliances or prospecting the neighbourhood of Fort Dauphin, his collaborators were carrying out research work and exploration further afield.

Maudave's journal is most vivid. Amidst statements relative to policy and achievements, personal incidents are chronicled which throw light upon the mentality of the people amongst whom he lived and whom he desired to win.

<sup>1</sup> MS. 888, Museum. Paris.

On every page of this diary one reads what these eager pioneers were planning to do once the expected workmen and the requisite tools had come.

The Count wrote letter after letter to Paris, but without getting any reply. Time was passing and no colonists arrived. What could be the cause for this extraordinary delay?

If the Minister did not write, others did, to report objections raised and criticisms levelled against the enterprise.

Exasperated by the futility and untruth of certain statements, the band of plucky and devoted men composed a refutation.

The memorandum, signed by Maudave and all his collaborators, concludes with the statement that all that was wanted to establish a well-founded colony were colonists, who would not meet with any obstacles, but could cultivate their land in perfect security.

Even before this document had reached Paris, the Count and his administrator, M. Pestre, drew up still another; a memorandum of what, spread over three years, they considered imperative in men and things.

The estimate of merchandise and goods required progressively in the course of the three years is illuminating, especially in the list of articles for barter; for instance, in the fourth year 500,000 needles and 50,000 pins. By then he hoped to have 'a nice town, several settlements, a large area of well-cultivated land owned by 1,300 white colonists; also 500 native soldiers, 100 sailors and over 18,000 Malagasy as free, paid labourers'.

As to the civilizing influence of the colony on the Malagasy, there Maudave did not expect any great results before the third year. Then, however, these would be visible owing to the power of imitation inherent in that people. In proof of this contention he mentioned that several Malagasy, on their return, after spending six weeks at the Ile de France, refused to speak with their own people. After a few weeks in their villages these men came to Fort Dauphin, declaring that they could no longer endure the barbarous life of their compatriots.

The haunting thought of England's rivalry comes out in the last sentence of this estimate-memorandum.

'It is evident that the success of our enterprise will for ever safeguard our Indian commerce.'

Maudave did not fear an immediate attempt by the English to found a colony in Madagascar, their possessions in India being a sufficiently great drain on their resources. He believed that at least for ten years to come no attack need be feared, but that it was imperative to make the best use of this respite. If he were really to receive all the men and means promised him, he felt convinced that, whatever the thoughts of the English on the question of Madagascar, there need be no fear of their consequences.

That the Count de Maudave's activity in Fort Dauphin did not pass unnoticed in England becomes evident from an official document in which his enterprise is mentioned, and also that a frigate of thirty cannon built there had sailed for Europe. The writer adds that 'the admiral of the fleet of observation to be sent to the Indian Seas will have orders to ask the French the reason for making acquisitions of territory in Madagascar, contrary to the Treaty, and that in time of peace. Such a visit will act as an eye-opener to that nation, and at the same time convince it, to its cost, of the folly to persist in making conquests and acquisitions of territory, which it is impossible to defend without a numerous fleet, as they should know from experience.'

Surely a proof, this, of the foresight of Maudave's policy, when aiming at training sailors, and of building ships, in Madagascar?

The fact that M. Dumas left the Ile de France was to prove the undoing of the Madagascar scheme, for the new Governor did not share his opinion on that matter. M. Desroches, who admitted having been, in France, as keen on this scheme as the Duc de Praslin, once in the Ile de France, became its most active opponent. This change of attitude was due to the financial aspect, for he feared lest the money to be spent on it would be a drain on the meagre exchequer of the colonies in his charge.

The Count de Maudave realized the awkwardness of having to write again and again for money. It seemed to him, therefore, that the only thing to do would be for the King to fix a separate budget for Madagascar, thereby giving him independence and the Governor relief. The latter, prejudiced by

those claims on his exchequer, was only too inclined to perceive drawbacks, and when the Count paid him a visit he refused even to look at his report, but on the other hand showed to the disappointed man the draft for his letter to the Minister in Paris.

Maudave's attempt to cultivate vines had been looked upon by M. Desroches with great disfavour, for it seemed to him a fatal mistake to deprive oneself of the most efficacious means of keeping a hold over the Malagasy: their passion for brandy he considered 'the strongest link which attached them to the French'. Once the natives learnt how to make spirits from the grapes this lever would of necessity be lost. Maudave held other views. He believed that nothing useful should be withheld from the natives, and the cultivation of vines might become an industry. He did not think at all that brandy would be made. Therefore, having discovered the vine to be indigenous, he had planted ten thousand vines, which, so he hoped, would permit the production of wines as good as those of the Cape of Good Hope.

Apart from this plantation, although terribly handicapped by the lack of European workmen, a variety of other experiments were made by the officers—cotton, flax, indigo, and tobacco were systematically grown; also silk-worms were being cultivated.

Undaunted, the handful of pioneers continued their arduous task, assisted by the native labourers, whom the chiefs hired out to them; even buildings were erected in solid masonry. The fort was completely rebuilt, its walls raised. Within were a spacious house for the Governor, a powder magazine, a large two-storeyed warehouse, also a barn, a cellar, and a storehouse for arms. Outside the fort were the dwelling-places for the civilians, barracks for the soldiers, a guard-house, a pavilion for the officers, a slaughter-house, a bakery, and a large cattle-yard.

There was still other progress to rejoice Maudave's heart—namely, the fact that so many chiefs were making treaties with him; also heads of villages with all their people and cattle came to settle near the fort. Thanks to honest payment, which enabled the men to buy cattle, the taste for labour developed.

He felt greatly encouraged by the attitude towards the

Christian religion; for evidently the reverent behaviour of the French during the Mass deeply impressed the people. He was happy to watch their eagerness to attend the service, their admiration and silence whilst it was going on. 'Sunday is here a veritable feast day for the Malagasy,' he wrote. Several of them asked to be instructed and baptized, but he felt this might be premature. His hopes that example would have its effect were confirmed. 'These people see that we do not steal, that we lead peaceful and orderly lives. They are trying to imitate us, our clothes, and especially our food, being greatly appreciated.'

Surely encouraging signs, permitting Maudave to hope for the complete success of his scheme, once those moral means in which he believed had proved their potency—good government, the charm and tranquillity of civilized life, and the miracles of industry.

The five hundred families of colonists he so impatiently awaited were to be the means 'to enable the destiny of Madagascar to be fulfilled in time'.

There is something heroic in the way Maudave carried on, loyally assisted by his like-minded collaborators. But what heartache it must have cost him to see month after month pass without any recruits joining him. He had based the success of his scheme on a certain number of colonists and soldiers. He had never more than fifty and he believed this to be due to the Governor's influence in Paris. His misgivings proved to be justified. He was suddenly notified by him of his probable recall within the course of a year. The settlement was to be abandoned; a few soldiers only were to remain as guards, and one agent was to carry on the cattle trade.

On receiving these orders, the Count wrote to the new Minister, Monsieur de Boynes: 'I have been forgotten. M. Desroches has written to the Duc de Praslin with so much emphasis and so often that he has succeeded in securing my recall. . . .'

The letter vibrates with emotion—the deep grief of the writer is transmitted—but then, at the end, his persistent hopefulness breaks through in the concluding sentence. 'I permit myself to plead for a reconsideration of this scheme—a scheme which had not been given time to justify itself.'



This heart-broken yet proud appeal came too late. Orders from the Minister in Paris recalling him crossed it, and in December 1770, two years after his arrival, he had to leave this creation of his love and of his genius.

The Count de Maudave persisted in clinging to his opinion that his Madagascar scheme had strategical value. He found added proof for this in a statement written by a French resident in Cape Town, communicated to M. Poivre, that his enterprise at Fort Dauphin had been watched with misgivings by the British in that city; and that the news of the abandonment of the settlement, and his recall, had been celebrated by them as though a victory.

Two years had passed since then, and once again he wrote to the Minister a long report recapitulating all that had happened, explaining the possibilities for forming 'a formidable navy'. He mentions the incident reported from Cape Town as a sure proof that the enemy realized what France was overlooking. To the possible objection that a second attempt might not necessarily succeed where the first had failed, he argues that 'Of course that will be the case if the methods remain the same . . . fifty soldiers, a few yards of blue cotton material and some brandy are not sufficient to ensure success.'

This appeal found no response; then suddenly Maudave's hopes rose high, for his ideas were taken up by a renowned military engineer and great traveller, M. Charpentier de Cossigny, who had come to the Ile de France. The two men became friends, and when M. de Cossigny left for France, he took with him a letter of introduction from the Count to the Minister, to whom he wished to submit a new scheme, or rather a reversion to Louis XIV's ideas concerning Madagascar. The plan was to secure for a company the monopoly of trade from Cape Natal to Cape Guardafui.

Cossigny held absolutely the same views as Maudave. Madagascar was to be conquered by winning the affection of the people—the conquest of hearts. Both he and Maudave hoped that force would not have to be applied, but that the natives would readily submit to gentleness and persuasion.

Unfortunately, the memorandum which M. de Cossigny<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Membre de l'Académie des Sciences. Author of 3 vols., *Voyages d'amélioration pour les Colonies*. Paris, 1802.

submitted to the Minister met with no better success than that of Maudave. Of the Count, a contemporary wrote: 'An indefatigable worker, capable administrator, good officer, and man of delicacy of feeling, charming and lovable, yet nevertheless he failed. Maudave gave up so much for the service of his country. All he lacked to attain fame was a little good fortune.'

Maudave would have been happy had he read the Duc de Praslin's marginal note to one of his many unanswered letters—it proves that his ideals of colonization were beginning to be appreciated. The Duke's note ran thus: 'May the gentleness of our administration, joined to a wise firmness, and especially a strict equity, be the principles and the rule of our operations. These means will win the most savage peoples, and secure for us the truest confidence of the Malagasy. Their trust will be a far better pledge for our settlement than vain oaths of fidelity.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> MS. Arch. Min. Col., Paris. 1st January 1773. Cossigny to Monsieur de Boyne.

## Chapter VI

### A WOULD-BE EMPEROR OF MADAGASCAR<sup>1</sup>

WHAT the Count de Maudave had failed to achieve, the Ministers in Paris expected to be accomplished by a foreigner,<sup>1</sup> who arrived in France in 1772, highly recommended by M. Desroches, the Governor of the Ile de France.

The personality of this candidate for the position as colonizer of Madagascar, Baron Aladar de Benyowsky, was certainly most unlike that of his predecessors.

M. Desroches had made the Baron's acquaintance at the Ile de France, where the latter arrived in a French ship coming from China, accompanied by a party of Russians. He at once succumbed to the charm of the dashing cavalier, whose story of misfortune and of deeds of prowess appealed to heart and imagination.

His colleague, M. Poivre, the Intendant, held aloof, much to the regret of the Governor, who in spite of the antagonistic attitude of all the other officials, civilian and military, persisted in his belief in the Baron. To every one else this 'captivating' stranger was an adventurer, to whose tales of adventure and of exploration of the China Sea they refused to give credence.

By the Governor's request, Benyowsky wrote a detailed statement concerning himself, of which M. Desroches passed on what he considered most important to the Minister in Paris, explaining that he did so as much as possible in the Baron's own words.<sup>2</sup>

'M. d'Aladar de Benyowsky, the grandson of a Pole, who had settled in Transylvania, had fought with the Polish Confederates against the newly elected King, Prince Poniatovsky, whom the Empress Catherine of Russia upheld. The Baron having been made prisoner by a detachment of Russians, was sent to Kazan where he lived on parole. His

<sup>1</sup> In the French edition this chapter has 20 pages.

<sup>2</sup> MS. Arch. Min. Col., Paris. 20th March 1772. Port Louis.

plan to escape having been discovered, he was exiled to Kamtchatka.

‘Here he was well treated by the commandant. He also made friends with other exiles, among them several officers. A plan to escape was fomented and successfully carried out. The Baron made himself master of the fortress and killed those who were not of his party, or likely to offer resistance; the kindly commandant was shot.<sup>1</sup>

‘Two vessels in the harbour were sunk; the third, whose captain had made common cause with the mutineers, served to carry sixty-seven persons to safety. The intention had been to reach the western coast of America, and then to go to Chile. He professed having come across several unknown islands, but various events compelled him to return west. He touched at Japan and Formosa. Prevented by the wind from reaching Manila and the Philippines, the ship was driven to the Chinese coast. He was very well received by the Portuguese Governor of Macao. He also notified the French Comptoir of Canton of his arrival, and at the same time he claimed the protection of the King of France, putting himself under the French flag.

‘It appears that the English did their best to lure the Baron on to their ships, offering to take him to Europe. This he refused, but they were so persistent that four of their vessels came to Macao, with the white flag hoisted, hoping that he would surrender to them. He was saved from falling into the trap owing to the interference of the Chevalier Robin, Chief of the Comptoir.

‘The Baron and his party, reduced by death to forty-seven persons, at last embarked in the *Dauphin* and the *Laverdy* bound for Lorient. They arrived at Port Louis a few days ago.’

The Governor of the Ile de France expressed his regret at the Intendant’s antagonistic attitude towards Baron d’Aladar, “whose misfortunes can not but interest every honest soul. . . . Is it probable that he has deceived us in China and here, only to be unmasked at Lorient? I must add that the Dutch and English have done their utmost to lure him and his suite on to their vessels. . . . I am adding

<sup>1</sup> By Benyowsky; so he himself stated.

some information which seems to me of the greatest importance. It appears that the Portuguese and the English are in negotiation, the latter wishing to buy from the King of Portugal the town of Macao and all the possessions which go with it. If this happens, then the English will be the exclusive masters of the China trade, and would be in the most advantageous position for attacking Manila at any moment, and to render themselves masters of the Philippines, where 300,000 civilized families would very soon become British subjects.”<sup>1</sup>

M. Desroches' championship of the interesting stranger proved quite useless as far as the inhabitants of the colony were concerned. Benyowsky's story was not believed, which had been also the case in Macao. This becomes evident from a letter written by an English merchant of that city to a friend in England. It was published in London in June 1772, in the *Gentleman's Magazine*.<sup>2</sup>

Whatever the attitude of the Intendant, the Governor was completely under the spell of the stranger's fascinating personality. Many topics were discussed, among them the Baron's idea of returning to Formosa to found a colony there, while the Governor told him of Madagascar and the latest failure of an attempt at a settlement on that island.

One day the Baron publicly declared that he intended to solicit from the King of France the appointment of Governor-General of Madagascar.

This idea seemed so absurd and impossible that it was merely treated as a joke.

News of the anticipated arrival having been received at Port Lorient, the commandant of that port communicated with the Duc d'Aiguillon,<sup>3</sup> who instructed the Commissaire of Brittany to provide the party of strangers with food and lodging.

Benyowsky, in his memoirs,<sup>4</sup> summarized his experiences in France thus: 'On 2nd of August I received an invitation from the Duc d'Aiguillon, which was brought to me by a messenger

<sup>1</sup> *Isle de France*, 20th March 1772. MSS. Arch. Min. Col., Paris.

<sup>2</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine*, London, June 1772.

<sup>3</sup> He had succeeded the Duc de Choiseul as Minister of War. *Larousse*, vol. i, writes of the Duc d'Aiguillon that he became famous for his inefficiency.

<sup>4</sup> *Memoirs and Travels of Mauritius*, Count de Benyowsky. London, 1791.

of State. On August 8th I arrived in Compiègne, where the Minister then was. He received me with cordiality and distinction, and proposed to me to enter into the services of his master, with the offer of a regiment of infantry, which I accepted, on condition that His Majesty would be pleased to employ me in forming an establishment beyond the Cape.

'In December the Duc d'Aiguillon proposed to me from His Majesty to form an establishment on the island of Madagascar, upon the same footing as I had proposed to found one on the island of Formosa. I at last complied with the desire of the Minister, to whom I shall be ever bound in gratitude, as well as by personal esteem and attachment.'

In reality things had not moved so rapidly. Part of Benyowsky's success was due to the fact that Poland was at the moment of great interest to the French, and also to the influence of the Duchesse d'Aiguillon and to his uncle's intercession on his behalf. This highly respected elderly gentleman was commander of the fortress of Bar-le-Duc.

The young man was welcomed in court circles. His romantic personality captivated every one, for not every day in the *salons* of Paris could such a far-travelled, interesting foreigner be met.

What appealed to Louis XV was Baron Benyowsky's offer to make Madagascar a French colony, instead of Formosa, as circumstances had directed his enterprising mind into a new channel. Madagascar was to be his field of activity, if Louis XV would deign to entrust him with that task. The King at once decided to make use of 'the talents, experiences, and discoveries, in order to prevent any other Power from benefiting by them'. He therefore entrusted, in March 1773, 'to this talented foreigner', the protégé of the Duchess d'Aiguillon and of many other court ladies, the task of 'civilizing the Malagasy by religion and by example, and to discover a market for the goods of France in exchange for the products of Madagascar'. Consternation reigned in Port Louis when the King's decision became known.

Louis XV acceded to Benyowsky's suggestion for the formation of a Corps of Volunteers. The nucleus was to be formed of his Russian soldiers and a certain number of Frenchmen; the rest to be recruited at the Ile de France. The corps was to be known as 'Volontaires de Benyowsky'. Everything he

asked for was granted him in men, means, and equipment. Meanwhile, Benyowsky's wife, whom he had not seen for several years, joined him in Paris.

Two weeks before embarking for Madagascar, Benyowsky received a letter from the Minister in which the King's intentions with regard to the Madagascar enterprise are once more explained, so as to leave no doubt whatever as to its purpose and scope.

M. de Boynes wrote to M. le Baron de Benyowsky:

'By attaching you to his service, the King has wished to enable you to prove your zeal; His Majesty has therefore chosen you to organize a settlement in Madagascar, which seems to him an absolute necessity for provisioning the Ile de France. I can do no better than to impart to you His Majesty's wishes, than to let you have a copy of this letter written by his orders to the Chevalier de Ternay and to M. Maillard.<sup>1</sup> It contains the instructions which you are to carry out. However, the correspondence which you will have with these gentlemen with regard to the details of your operations should not prevent you from rendering directly to me an account of what you will be doing for the success of the important and honourable mission with which His Majesty has entrusted you, and I ask you not to keep me in ignorance of anything concerning this matter.'

At the end of April 1773, 'Colonel' Baron de Benyowsky left Lorient with his volunteers—three companies of 79 men each, and 21 officers, two of them Russians. The doctor who had accompanied him from Kamtchatka was also of the party.

On arrival at the Ile de France, Benyowsky found a new Governor and a new Intendant. The letter from the Minister which he delivered to the two Administrators mentioned that the Count de Maudave's suggestions and ideas<sup>2</sup> were at the base of this new venture, the former, it was believed,

'having failed, because not carried out in right principles, also owing to the impossibility of letting the Count have all he had asked. In spite of the small success of his attempt,

<sup>1</sup> The new Governor and Intendant respectively.

<sup>2</sup> The copious manuscripts, kept at the Archives of the Colonial Ministry in Paris, have never yet been published. The Count de Maudave died of fever in 1778 in Masulipatam.

it is, however, undoubtedly true that Madagascar contains great natural resources. It is therefore advisable, instead of establishing a colony which may not be welcome, because liable to violate the rights of property, to create a small post, from which to enter into practical alliances with the natives and to establish a regular trade. . . . It will depend upon the intelligence of the man in charge of this mission to open up new branches of trade, and to direct it with such prudence that one may hope ultimately to be able to establish that very kind of colony the Count had had in mind; one truly well founded on the interests of the islanders, thanks to the confidence with which one has inspired them.<sup>1</sup>

The letter further stated that the Baron was to choose the place for the settlement, possibly Tamatave, but on no account Fort Dauphin.

All private trading was henceforth to be prohibited; everything was to be done on behalf of the King only. No other ships were to be permitted to proceed to Madagascar than those destined to carry slaves, cattle, and rice. These conditions—a death-blow to their businesses—set all the traders of the Ile de France against the new enterprise.

For a reason best known only to himself, Benyowsky believed himself to be independent of the administrators of the Ile de France. What he demanded, he expected them to carry out, with the natural result of ever-increasing friction and perpetual misunderstanding.

The Baron evolved a new and most ambitious scheme, of which he wrote to the Minister. Instead of founding one settlement or post, Benyowsky suggested the formation of a vast colony, for which he would require proportionally vast sums of money, and a hundred and fifty European families to come out every year.

When at last he left for Madagascar, he was accompanied by his wife and his sister-in-law and his Corps of Volunteers, chiefly Creoles, recruited in the two colonies.

Six weeks later he wrote to Paris that the whole island of Madagascar had been subjugated, which feat he had achieved with 160 men.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> MS. Arch, Min. Col., Paris, 1st May 1773. Dépôt des fortifications.



The Minister was delighted with this news, for Benyowsky explained that the chiefs of thirty-two provinces now owed allegiance to the King; that they were willing to pay tribute in rice and cattle. According to the Baron's letter, 23,000 Malagasy were ready to fight against the King's enemies, and 2,000 were willing to embark on French ships to fight anywhere against them if under French officers. He reported also that trade with Africa had been established, and that the excellent harbour of Bombetok, with much land, had been ceded to France.

To judge by the Baron's letters, maps, and plans, which he periodically sent to give information of his progress, everything was so favourable, that it seemed wise to profit by these fortunate circumstances to launch out on a much vaster scheme. In the autumn of 1774 he sent a carefully elaborated statement, which was to prove that if he was accorded all he had asked for in European families, soldiers, and ships, he could soon have six settlements and garrisons at several harbours, and a revenue of 150,000 francs in cash from the trade. The Baron added: 'I feel certain of this, although I have not yet begun trading in slaves, cattle, and rice.'

However, this scheme could be carried out only if wide powers were given him, and complete independence from the authorities of the Ile de France.

According to Benyowsky's reports, the Malagasy were congratulating themselves at being under his gentle government. This, however, was not the impression that M. de Kerguelen, a young naval officer, received when visiting Benyowsky at Louisburg, the headquarters of the Baron at the Bay of Antongil. In fact, the navigator found him hated by the natives, who spoke of him only as 'the Bad White'.<sup>1</sup>

The site chosen by the Baron for his settlement having proved to be unhealthy, he decided to build a new city further away from the sea. He called it the Plain of Health—the exact meaning of its Malagasy name. He sent plans to Paris, showing where every building was going to be erected.

Meanwhile, M. Turgot, the newly appointed Minister, approached the Madagascar enterprise with an unprejudiced mind. He at once perceived that Benyowsky had completely

<sup>1</sup> M. de Kerguelen, *Relation de deux Voyages*. Paris 1761.

disregarded orders. 'Instead of a simple trading post, you are aiming at a colony. This idea must be dropped,' the Minister wrote. 'It has never been the intention to make you the absolute master of the island of Madagascar. . . . I must warn you that if you will not follow the principles laid down I shall be compelled to ask for orders from the King for your recall.'<sup>1</sup>

Why this letter was not posted can be surmised only. It may have been due to the fact that M. Turgot left the department to become Controller of Finance, or to M. de Benyowsky's having an influential friend in the Ministry of the Navy, who may have considered it a pity to send on this stern admonition.

While the Baron's letters to the Governor of the Ile de France were cries of distress, his reports to Paris were all aglow with pride at his achievements, which he described in detail.

Everything seemed flourishing, and that, primarily, due to what he called 'force of character'. Although whole provinces had risen in arms against him (he admitted this now) yet one hundred and twenty-two chiefs and five kings had made their submission.

The new Minister, M. Sartine, being ignorant of what had gone before, and Benyowsky having influential friends, the latter was appointed 'Commander for the King in Madagascar and the small adjacent islands'.<sup>2</sup> The Administrator of the Ile de France was informed that 'because of the opinion His Majesty had formed of the talents and character of M. de Benyowsky, and in view of all he had suffered and achieved, it was considered best not to inquire too much how far he may have exceeded his orders, but that in future he would be more careful', and hope was expressed of harmony being re-established.

Before this letter could reach the Ile de France, even the hitherto friendly Governor had no longer been able to remain silent. The administrator's letters to the Minister gave a different version from those of the Baron, and this discrepancy struck M. de Sartine, a former chief of police, and as General de Bellecombe and the Sieur Chevreau were due to proceed to Pondichery, the two gentlemen were appointed commissioners. The Minister himself drew up a list of twenty-five questions

<sup>1</sup> 30th May 1775.

<sup>2</sup> Versailles, June 1775.

which M. de Benyowsky was to answer; and during the visit of the inspectors, he was to consider himself under their orders.

After a short stay at the Ile de France, M. de Bellecombe and the Sieur Chevrav left for Madagascar, their frigate being accompanied by the patrol *Iphigenia*, under the command of M. de la Perouse,<sup>1</sup> whom Governor and Intendant had commanded to watch proceedings on their behalf.

The inspectors were surprised to find at Tamatave, the first port to be visited, only some empty huts, and no signs of any Europeans. The few natives explained that all commerce had stopped, because of wars made by the Baron, but that as far as they were concerned they were quite willing to resume trade with the French. At Foulpointe things were not much better. The King, Hiavy, a nephew of Queen Beti, made a very disappointing impression on the visitors, yet according to Benyowsky's reports he was supposed to be the most powerful chief of Madagascar, having sixty chiefs under him, and being able to raise thirty thousand men. The King complained of the lack of trade, and begged for a resumption of former relations. The assurances given him by the visitors, and a gift of twelve bottles of brandy, had a cheering effect.

Great things were expected from Louisburg, headquarters of the 'Commander for the King'. Here, however, the same disappointment as at Tamatave met the inspectors; so also at Fort St. Jean and Fort Augustus. The plain, which the Minister and his envoys believed to be well cultivated, with a city, with houses, public buildings and hospitals, they found to be 'an uninhabited desert'.

The surprised officers, crossing the plain, realized its natural fertility and learnt that, before Benyowsky had come, there had been forty villages, but that his wars had caused every one to flee.

Back from this inspection they asked M. de Benyowsky whether there were any other forts to inspect. 'No, they had been given up, as the men were required to strengthen the garrison at Louisburg.'

That watchful observer, M. de la Perouse, reported that M. de Bellecombe lost patience, and, turning to Benyowsky, said sternly: 'M. le Gouverneur, you have informed the Minister

<sup>1</sup> The future renowned navigator.

that you have laid the foundations of a large city. Where is that town? What has become of it? Has it vanished, for I see no signs of it—only a few miserable huts.’

The Baron, handing some plans to the General, replied that his forts had cost more than he had anticipated, therefore the funds had not sufficed to build the city. Cutting short these excuses, M. de Bellecombe said curtly: ‘I have come by order of the Minister to inspect your forts—not plans. Where is the great road to Bambetok?’

‘It has been traced, but wars have hindered the execution. Here are the plans.’

The inspector flared up.

‘I have been entrusted with the duty of inspecting work carried out and not works merely projected; achievements—not schemes.’

The astonishment of the inspectors, as more and more light was shed on the extraordinary conditions reigning in Benyowsky’s settlement, becomes evident from their report, written day by day.

One almost sees their eyebrows raised, the amazed look, as they listen to his cool and nonchalant replies. His utter self-complacency took them aback, while his readiness to answer the questionnaire submitted to him pleased them.

In a letter joined to the answered questionnaire, Benyowsky wrote:

‘I have nothing to reproach myself with, and I hope the inspectors will convince themselves that I have done nothing but what zeal and duty have demanded of me.’

The question of finance he dismissed in an off-hand manner, his military preoccupations having left him no time to trouble about it. He regretted not being able to supply any information concerning matters of administration.

What surprised the inspectors more than anything else was the Baron’s attitude towards the whole enterprise. He told M. de la Perouse that he considered ‘the idea of a colony to be pure folly’—adding that ‘unless the King could send annually six hundred soldiers, and expend annually two million livres, one had better hasten to pack up bag and baggage’. Yet he declared unabashedly that ‘should France renounce the idea of the conquest of Madagascar, that then he would suggest it

to the Emperor of Austria, the King of Prussia or to the Great Mogul'.

When the young officer point-blank asked the Baron what benefit he reckoned France had derived from his experiment, Benyowsky gave this astounding answer. 'Surely two million francs is not too big a sum to have been spent to prove to the Crown that in Madagascar nothing can be achieved in a small way.'

In their report on their mission, the commissioners, trying to be fair towards the accused, stated that they recognized in him a valiant soldier with the soul and ambition of a conqueror. However, their verdict on the financial aspect is scathing—'impossible to get any light on that matter, so great is the disorder'.

They regretted not having the power to close down there and then a settlement which for some time longer would cost lives and money, until, on the strength of their reports, decisions could be taken.

Their deliberate advice was 'to give up all idea of founding a colony on an island which, at all times, had been the grave of so many Frenchmen, and which is four thousand miles away from the capital'.

As for M. de Benyowsky, who was far from well, they granted him leave to go to the Ile de Bourbon, as it seemed unlikely that either he or his wife would survive another bad season.

However sure of the righteousness of his cause when speaking with the inspectors, Benyowsky was evidently afraid of the consequences their report might have. He decided, therefore, to forestall it, and asked the captain, who had orders to take him and his ladies to Bourbon, to sail instead to Cape Town. Here the Baron greatly annoyed the French agent by selling as slaves several Malagasy whom he had brought with him.

Although M. de Benyowsky arrived in Paris without orders, his arbitrary conduct was overlooked by the Minister, and in court circles it was generally believed that he had conquered all Madagascar. All might have gone smoothly for him, had he not made claims on the Crown which surprised and finally wearied the Minister. In his first letter<sup>1</sup> after arrival he stated

<sup>1</sup> 27th April 1777. Written at Versailles.

that before his departure for Madagascar the Minister had promised him to obtain for him the Cross of St. Louis and the rank of Brigadier. Might he have these two favours conferred on him at once, in recompense for his services? He asked also for the immediate settlement of advances he had made to the Crown amounting to 215,970 livres, 4 sols, and 3 deniers, which his wife had lent him.

M. de Benyowsky's financial situation becoming more and more desperate, he tried to hurry up the Minister by informing him that he had given his promise to the Malagasy to be back without fail by February; that the lives of his valiant companions were at stake; that his labours were endangered. He urged the political importance of his settlements, 'because the nation which holds Madagascar will be mistress of India, and England', so he affirmed, 'was sure to establish herself in Madagascar'.

Neither this proposal, nor several others which Benyowsky submitted to the Minister were accepted. Annoyed, he asked for leave of absence. This request, having been granted, he left for Hungary, where, so he wrote, he 'was received with distinction by his compatriots, and with favours at the court'.<sup>1</sup>

On his return to Versailles, 'Count de Benyowsky', as he now styled himself, found the situation most disagreeable, not only owing to increasing debts, but also to the uncertainty of his position. Worst of all, the King had disbanded his Corps of Volunteers; but, in compensation, Louis XV awarded the Count a large sum, for which he was to sign a general acquittance. He did so, with the rider that he felt justified in claiming another 24,000 livres.

To the great annoyance of the military, Benyowsky, after only two years' service, was raised to the rank of Brigadier, with a pension of 7,000 livres, and was awarded the Order of St. Louis. Yet, in spite of these tokens of favour, he was not permitted to return to Madagascar.

Unable to bear inactivity, he asked the King's permission to fight for the Emperor. This having been granted, M. de Benyowsky again left France. On his return 'after having performed great exploits on the field of battle' he once more claimed the repayment of his wife's money, a sum of 165,000 frs.

<sup>1</sup> 15th January 1778.

In a sarcastic and scathing reply to a definite refusal, he wrote to the Minister that 'as it had been decided to sacrifice his fortune in order to save the King expense, this injustice set him free from any obligation of gratitude'. Proudly he added: 'I am a soldier; honour is my nourishment, and I shall be sufficiently avenged when it will become publicly known that the only reasons you can bring forward are dictated by partiality. My cause is known to my master . . . the Emperor of Austria.'

However, not long after, the soldier turned merchant. In 1779 he started a company at Trieste for overseas trade with the sanction of the Emperor of Austria. Lack of capital, however, brought it all too soon to an end, and in 1782, back in Paris, Benyowsky once more presented a memorandum on a settlement in Madagascar, which, so he stated, required no other assistance from the State than the King's permission to take possession of the lands he might succeed in acquiring in that island. The Minister of Foreign Affairs supported this scheme and urged its acceptance, as otherwise Benyowsky might find support across the Channel.

In this assumption M. de Vergennes was confirmed by General Dumas, a former Governor of the Ile de France, who had talked with Benyowsky, and had perceived that the latter was cherishing the ambition of becoming, with England's assistance, the recognized ruler of Madagascar. General Dumas reminded M. de Vergennes of the daring of Benyowsky's character, and that there were no bounds to what he might attempt.

'The British Government', the General wrote,<sup>1</sup> 'will know how to use the scaffolding which the imagination of M. de Benyowsky has raised for his own elevation for the glory of the Empire.'

This fear that England might establish herself in Madagascar became almost an obsession of several Frenchmen, who sent in various memoranda as to what should be done in Madagascar, and that quickly, before the enemy could establish himself there. Each writer put forward a different point of view.

The Count de Précourt was prompted by fear of the damage

<sup>1</sup> Letter dated 'Paris, rue et Hotel Ventadour, 16 Septembre 1783'.

an English colony in Madagascar could do to French shipping. His memorandum was the result of thirty years' study and travel, and he hoped the King would give one hour of his time to study this scheme, because 'that deserter Benyowsky is in London, where he is asking the English to enable him to realize his dream in Madagascar. Should he succeed in deciding them to settle on the east coast before we do, they will cause irremediable damage to our influence in India.'<sup>1</sup>

This patriotic officer laid before the King a scheme whereby, without expenditure of money or shedding of blood, Madagascar could be won—namely by the establishment of a protectorate.<sup>1</sup>

General Bellecombe, back in France, was requested by the Comptroller-General to meet in consultation the Chevalier de la Serre, who had been for many years chief of the Madagascar trade for the Ile de France, to discuss 'how best to prevent the English from establishing themselves in Madagascar and how to acquire a preponderating influence in that island'.

The plans for a settlement suggested by the Chevalier were favoured and met with approval by M. Abell, General Secretary of Commerce.

A year later, in 1786, it was Benyowsky's comrade in arms, the Chevalier de Sanglier, who gave his opinion on this burning question. His advice was to create a commercial settlement and to transplant whole families of negroes from Mozambique; also Indians from Malabar, as well as Chinese. 'As to the Malagasy,' he wrote, 'if treated gently and frankly, if never deceived and every promise is kept, then one will be able to do everything one wants. There must be, however, a total abstention from taking part in their wars; and an absolute prohibition of the slave trade, as the chief cause of wars, and of the depopulation of the country.'<sup>2</sup>

At this time Benyowsky was in London, where he offered to the Government to conquer Madagascar on behalf of England. He had many interviews with the Ministers, to whom he explained all the advantages the possession of the great island would offer. His promises to achieve the conquest he based

<sup>1</sup> The principles suggested, the ideas concerning administration and personnel, are those Maréchal Gallieni taught, and which make the glory of his school of colonial administration.

<sup>2</sup> *Mémoire du chevalier Sanglier Lorient*, 6 Sec. 1786, Arch. Min. Col., Paris.



on the fact of having been elected by a national assembly of thirty thousand armed men, Ampansacabé, or supreme ruler. Kings and chiefs had unanimously chosen him as the successor of the founder of the dynasty of their ancestors. He had been authorized to make alliances with foreign Powers by these Malagasy chiefs.<sup>1</sup>

Why the British Government did not see fit to employ Benyowsky is not on record. Whatever the reason of the refusal, his services not being wanted by England, Benyowsky became a company promotor.

A man of many resources, he assured his new friends in London that not only had he been elected sovereign ruler by a national assemblage of the Malagasy, but that the Emperor of Austria had granted him his protection 'for sailing the seas under his flag, for civilizing the Malagasy and for governing that people'.<sup>2</sup> This document granted him the right to the Austrian flag, but conferred no financial benefits.

Legitimized by these two impressive documents, Benyowsky founded a company for trading with Madagascar. He represented to the would-be shareholders that he owned vast territories in that island, that several of the officers of the Corps of Volunteers were his associates, and that M. Mayeur, the interpreter, was acting as agent during his absence.

The largest subscriber, and most enthusiastic upholder of Benyowsky's scheme, was M. Hyacinthe de Magellan,<sup>3</sup> a member of the Royal Society of London. Benyowsky appointed him Plenipotentiary for the State of Madagascar, to deal on its behalf with sovereigns, companies and private individuals; also to organize emigration, and to be in charge of supplies. As the capital subscribed in London was not sufficient, M. de Magellan, who had friends in Baltimore, suggested trying to raise more funds there.

The firm of Zollikoffer and Meissonniers of Baltimore<sup>4</sup> made common cause with Benyowsky's company. A regular contract was drawn up, by which, in return for capital and ships, Benyowsky promised on his word of honour to export as many robust slaves as possible to Cape Town and to St. Domingo

<sup>1</sup> MS. Arch. Min. Col., Carton VIII. *Acte du Serment des Rois, Princes et chefs de l'Île de Madagascar consommé le 17e Octobre 1776.*

<sup>2</sup> Arch. Min. Col., Carton VIII. 30th September 1783.

<sup>3</sup> A descendant of the navigator.

<sup>4</sup> Of the Canton St. Gallen.

for Zollikoffer and Meissonniers. A ship was chartered and insured in Baltimore as well as in London. All the shareholders were promised 100 per cent as first payment, and later 50 per cent.<sup>1</sup>

Several of the gentlemen decided to sail with Benyowsky to Madagascar. Among these was a Baron Adelsheim, who took his wife with him; so did also one of the seamen. The party left in October 1784 and reached Madagascar in June 1785. Here so many difficulties had to be overcome that Benyowsky's associates became somewhat suspicious as to whether, after all, what they had been led to believe was really true.

It was not until two months after his return to Madagascar that Benyowsky wrote to the Administrators of the *Ile de France* to announce his arrival. He did so from his city of Mauretania.<sup>2</sup> He assured them of his friendly disposition towards the colony entrusted to their care. He invited them to rely on him for the supply of rice, cattle, pigs, fowls, and timber, and to send ships direct to his various establishments along the coast. He explained that his settlements had been formed under the protection of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor.

With regard to the slave trade he wrote:

'His Majesty the King of France has never approved of the sale of the unhappy Malagasy, and the means used are repugnant to his benevolent character. You know yourself what calamity this trade occasions in the tribal wars, which not only depopulate this vast island, but prevent cultivation and keep it in a state of savagery.

'Therefore I exhort and ask you, gentlemen, to prohibit this trade<sup>3</sup> completely, and I, for my part, will make every effort to maintain throughout the island a state of perfect tranquillity, in order to enable civilization to flourish. However, that the cessation of this miserable branch of commerce may not cause harm to the cultivation of your colonies, I suggest the following scheme. . . . I propose that the rice of Madagascar be exchanged in Mozambique for slaves. However, as you may consider the crossing too long, I undertake to carry on this trade, thanks to the communications

<sup>1</sup> I have tried in vain at Lloyd's to trace this transaction.—S. E. H.

<sup>2</sup> After himself, as his name was 'Mauritius-Augustus'. <sup>3</sup> In Malagasy only.

which I have established between my settlements, and I will hand the slaves over to you at the Bay of Antongil.'

This communication left no doubt in the minds of the officials at the Ile de France of Benyowsky's consciousness of power. Apprehensions increased. Orders were therefore sent to the Sieur Quinquet, the French agent in Madagascar, to discover what the Count's armed forces were, and in whose name he was acting. This letter fell into Benyowsky's hands, who, after reading it, wrote a haughty, imperious message to the Sieur:

'Tell them: I act in my own name, but under the protection and guarantee of His Majesty the Emperor, and with the tacit consent of France. My forces are sufficient for defence and for punishing any one trying to disturb public tranquillity in this country. . . .

'As to my intentions, they are to civilize the nation, to draw it out of ignorance and to give it a constitution and a stable government. As these principles can be carried out only in tranquillity, by cultivation and an increase of population, I prohibit all war, command the soil to be cultivated, and I prohibit the slave trade. Once the Ile de France accepts these facts, its inhabitants will find a thousand outlets for trade and increase in prosperity, for the supply of rice, cattle, and timber can never be exhausted. In my convention the French settlements are guaranteed preferential treatment.

'I think my explanation is sufficiently plain. On arrival here, the gentlemen can verify my statements. I cannot assume that, through obstinacy on their part, they will compel me to have recourse to other means than those of amity. However, convince them of the fact that if occasion should demand it I will take measures against them as disturbers of the peace.'

Meanwhile, Benyowsky was organizing his empire. His brother-in-law was appointed 'Secretary of State and Lieutenant-General of Madagascar, to enjoy all the honours, prerogatives and pre-eminence belonging to his office'.<sup>1</sup> Baron Adelsheim was made Lord Chancellor and Intendant of the Household of the Sovereign, or Ampansacabé of Madagascar, Duke of Aladar, Count of the Holy Roman Empire.

<sup>1</sup> Brit. Mus. Add. MSS. 18134, No. 38.

In fact, Benyowsky assumed the prerogatives of a monarch, 'by the grace of God', and used the plural *Majestatum*.

Considering all this, the Governor of the Ile de France had good cause to be apprehensive of what the consequences of Benyowsky's actions might be. He decided to secure his person, so as to prevent him from making further alliances or building forts.

As the season did not permit any military expedition, the Governor tried other means for achieving his end. He found a ready and capable agent in M. Mayeur, a well-known trader, who had offered to use his influence with the natives, to make them boycott Benyowsky, and then also to arrest him. It was believed that the Count had no artillery, and, in all, fifteen Europeans and sixty natives. Only if M. Mayeur's plan failed should force be used. The Governor hoped the King would sanction this, 'as Benyowsky could not be considered anything else but a vagabond, a private individual, who was misusing the trust formerly put in him'.

When the season was at last favourable for an expedition, the Governor sent a Captain Larcher with 60 soldiers to secure the person of 'the self-styled King of Madagascar'.

After penetrating deep into the forest, the Frenchmen found to their surprise that not only had Benyowsky a fort, but artillery, placed on a platform.

Orders were not to fire; merely to make Benyowsky a prisoner. The men, advancing in good order, were suddenly met by a fusillade, and the captain saw Benyowsky himself in the act of preparing to fire a cannon, which, however, failed to go off. He now gave orders to attack and to fire. . . .

He saw the Count take up a musket, drop it and fall. . . .

Among the documents the captain found in Benyowsky's portfolio was the original of his election as Ampansacabé, with the names of all the chiefs and the signatures of the Kings Yavi and Lamboride.

There were also the Cross of St. Louis and the ribbon of the Austrian order given Benyowsky by the Emperor Joseph II.

Captain Larcher concluded his report with these words: 'Thus fell, in defence of his Empire, that enterprising and seductive man, who, as is evident from his papers, had made plans to establish a monarchy in Madagascar.'

When M. de Magellan got news of what had happened, he decided to recover some at least of his lost capital by the publication of Benyowsky's *Memoirs*,<sup>1</sup> which the latter had entrusted to him.

The book proved a great success. It was translated into various languages and for a time was a best seller.

Even to-day, opinions differ as to whether the Count de Benyowsky would or would not have made a success of his scheme for the colonization of Madagascar.

<sup>1</sup> These memoirs tell of his pre-Madagascar experiences and adventures only.

## *Chapter VII*

### FRENCH PERSISTENCY

IN spite of the complete failure of every attempt permanently to establish a settlement in Madagascar, the Government in Paris did not let the idea drop. Therefore, when in 1791 M. Lescallier was appointed Commissaire of all French settlements beyond the Cape of Good Hope, he was given orders to study the question of Madagascar on the spot.

Interrupting his journey to Pondichery, he landed at Foulpointe to visit Chief Zaca-Vola in the capacity of 'Messenger of friendship on the part of the National Assembly and of the King'.<sup>1</sup>

To judge by the letter<sup>2</sup> M. Lescallier wrote to the Minister, there was an urgent and immediate need for arriving at some satisfactory arrangement with regard to settling differences arising between the traders and the native authorities. M. Lescallier therefore instituted a quasi-consular court. He gave to M. Dumaine, Chief of Trade, two notables as assessors, representing the authorities of the Ile de France. A document was drawn up, of which paragraph 5 runs thus: 'All Frenchmen residing at Foulpointe, or in the Province, must behave in such a manner as to make the name of France loved by the inhabitants, and to bear in mind that they are not in a country subject to French laws; and therefore follow the usages of the inhabitants, who should be treated with gentleness and equity.' The Frenchmen were to be just and benevolent, and never to permit themselves any arbitrary actions; least of all to have recourse to violence.

From the King, again, the Commissaire expected faithfulness to their pledges and fairness in their dealings with the traders.

M. Lescallier proposed to substitute for the customary oath of blood one calling as witness upon God 'the Eternal, who is the God alike of Frenchmen and Malagasy'.

<sup>1</sup> Carton X, Arch. Miss. Col., Paris.

<sup>2</sup> Madagascar 626, Août 1792. M. Lescallier au Ministre.

The King expressed his readiness to do so, but stipulated that instead of raising the hand to heaven, as was the European usage, the earth was to be beaten with a rod at each word pronounced.

There is a terrible vehemence in the Malagasy formula of the oath, which ran thus: 'Should we fail to keep our oath towards the Frenchmen, then may Heaven let us suffer the worst of ills. May our bones be scattered over the earth to be gnawed by dogs; may the earth open itself to swallow us up. If we fall short of our oath and our promise we will declare our god to be a dog.'

The French, for their part, swore affection to the King, Zaca-Vola, to the chiefs, and to all the people, pledging themselves to avoid everything which might cause dissension, or lead to war between themselves and the neighbouring people.

In his report M. Lescallier assured the Minister 'that if this plan of conduct be faithfully carried out, the whole island will be soon conquered by means of friendship and affection'.

He felt sure that the Minister would be satisfied with what had been great joy for him to achieve. He hoped the National Assembly would be informed 'of the fact that the King, as well as the chiefs of this part of Madagascar, hoists the flag of France on all ceremonial occasions'.

The Commissaire further reported that these Malagasy rulers dress in the French clothing sent them on behalf of the King of France by the Governor of the Ile de France.

The King Zaca-Vola wears a hat with the national cockade. He asks that, in order to be obeyed and respected also by the white men, a medal should be sent him, as 'he considers himself as under the immediate protection of France, and his kingdom as being, so to say, a dependency of France'.<sup>1</sup>

M. Lescallier added to his letter a list of certain articles which he believed would be most useful as presents for these new allies of France. He also asked for twenty medals as decorations for friendly chiefs, apart from the one for the King.

On his own responsibility and as a purely temporary measure,

<sup>1</sup> Procès Verbal: des operations faites à Madagascar par M. Lescallier Commissaire Général et Ordonateur des Colonies, l'un des quatres Commissaires civils, delegé par le Roi aux Etablissements français au dela du Cap de Bonne Esperance, en execution des Decrêts de l'Assemblée Nationale de France des 18 Août 1791 et 15 Janvier 1792.

until an answer to his request could reach Foulpointe, M. Lescallier gave the King, to wear round his neck, a tricolour ribbon, from which an ecu of six francs was hanging.

While these events were happening on the east coast, on the west coast a large party of British subjects were experiencing the worst Madagascar had to offer. The Indiaman *Winterton* carrying 280 passengers struck a submerged reef; the sea being calm, boats were lowered, but the breakers made all landing impossible. Soon a tempest broke loose, and the vessel was smashed by the waves. Of the two hundred and eighty passengers only one hundred reached land. Clinging to rafters, empty barrels, chicken crates, they were carried by the current to the shore. After a weary tramp of sixty-three miles, which it took the footsore people eight days to accomplish, Tulcar was reached. Here the King welcomed the party, promising them his protection as he, 'King Baba, and King George of England were brothers'.

In the only undamaged boat three officers succeeded in reaching the Bay of St. Augustine. Here they learnt to their great distress from the King, who styled himself 'Prince of Wales',<sup>1</sup> that, owing to the season, no vessels were expected for many months. Two of the officers therefore proceeded in their frail craft to Mozambique to get help.

When his miserable guests had been two months in Tulcar, King Baba informed them that on the other side of the island French settlements existed. Why not try to get there? Asked why he had not told them this before, the King explained that until just then, when he had realized his mistake, he believed the English and the French to be such mortal enemies that whenever any of them met they at once killed each other.

Although ready to face all the dangers of crossing the island, the Englishmen nevertheless felt that unless the King gave them guides and an escort it would be folly to venture out alone on a journey of six hundred miles. However, as the King refused to expose his men to the risks of such an undertaking, nothing came of it. Perhaps this was just as well, as most probably fever and fatigue would have soon killed the Europeans *en route*.

<sup>1</sup> Many of the natives of this bay could make themselves understood in English. Here, as also in the island of Johanna, it was the custom to call oneself by the names of royalty and the nobility of England.



Seven months after the shipwreck, rescue came from Mozambique, and those few who had not succumbed to fever were able to leave 'the reef-girt island', as they called Madagascar.

One of the passengers, Mr. Buchan of Kelloc, published not only a narrative of these experiences, but many interesting details of land and people amongst whom Fate had flung him. Deeply impressed by what he saw of the misery caused by the slave trade, he wrote:<sup>1</sup> 'It is high time this odious traffic came to an end, and that our name should make itself known under a more attractive aspect . . . for this terrible scourge, let loose on this island by the Europeans, England bears a great part of the responsibility. . . . Let us send messengers of peace, with the olive branch in the one hand, and in the other, the benefits of Christian instruction. . . .'

While the unhappy Englishmen were languishing at Tulear and at the Bay of St. Augustine, much was happening in France, for when M. Lescallier's report on Madagascar was being discussed in Paris there was no longer a king to sanction the gift of medals.

It is in connexion with this request that the great political changes become linked with Madagascar. The Convention had abolished all decorations, and here was a request for them! The report put before the Convention raised the question: 'Can the Republic which has suppressed decorations, nevertheless grant medals to the King of Foulpointe and his chiefs?' Apparently not. The other requests for guns etc. were acceded to, as it was considered good policy for the Republic to keep up the alliance with a neighbour who 'might be of use to the Eastern colonies and influence the conditions of peace and tranquillity prevalent at the moment.'<sup>2</sup>

It was not until ten years after that another inspector was sent out, Monsieur Bory Saint Vincent.

In 1802 the Governor of the Ile de France, dissatisfied with the behaviour of the King of Foulpointe, had him arrested and taken to the Ile de France, while another member of his family was made ruler in his stead.

<sup>1</sup> Buchan of Kelloc, Edinburgh, 1820. *A Narrative of the loss of the Winterton, East-Indiaman, by a passenger in the Ship.*

<sup>2</sup> Arch. Min. Col., Carton IX. *Rapport à la Convention sur la lettre de M. Lescallier, 10me Mai, 1793.*

What better proof than this of the very real influence the French authorities of the Ile de France were swaying over chiefs and natives of Foulpointe?

In a memorandum drawn up by one of the leading officials it was stated that this attitude might possibly be due to the subsidy in gunpowder and arak regularly sent from the Ile de France.

During the early years of the Revolution one of the governors of the Ile de France had been M. Charpentier de Cossigny, that ardent believer in the future of Madagascar as a French colony.

Although his memoranda 1764, 1771 and 1773 had not had the desired results, he now sent in another one, hoping that the Republic would appreciate what the King's Government had failed to do. If in this memorandum the representative of the Republic still reiterates his contention of Madagascar being a source of wealth, which France should make her own, and thereby compensate herself for the loss of other colonies, there is, however, a new element introduced with regard to the Malagasy.

M. de Cossigny wrote:

'Our new régime, which has equality as its basis, will win all the peoples of Madagascar and weld them into one population, under the name of French. This can be done by means of persuasion and gentleness on the part of our Government. The natives will be attracted to us by the lure of liberty and our offers of the benefits of agriculture and industry. Above everything the Malagasy will be won by the peace which we will bring to their country, hitherto suffering so terribly from the scourge of war, and by the security to life and property provided by our legislation.'

There is a sound of triumph in the concluding sentence of this memorandum:

'It is something completely new, to make known to a people groaning under barbarity the inexpressible happiness which is the result of liberty.'

Meanwhile, unbeknown to the Europeans, a new power was arising in the heart of Madagascar, separated from the east coast by densely wooded mountains. This new power was that of the rulers of the tribe of the Hovas in the kingdom of Imerina.

The first European to bring to the governor of the Ile de France information concerning it was M. Mayeur. This highly respected trader and intrepid explorer was the first European to visit Tananarive,<sup>1</sup> the capital of Imerina. He did so in 1777 by the invitation of the ruler.

M. Mayeur had been equally gladly welcomed by the King of Antsirane in the most northern part of the island. This ruler was quite willing for the French to settle within his realm, but they were warned 'never to reckon on any land being sold them'.

To the Frenchman his visit to Tananarive was of the greatest interest, because all he saw of ruler, people and country, was so totally different from what had hitherto been known of Madagascar and its inhabitants.<sup>2</sup> The country he found to consist, apart from one vast and fertile plain, of nothing but barren mountains, where, thanks to tremendous effort, rice was nevertheless being cultivated.

After describing all he had seen of the industry of the Hova, he concluded his report with these words: 'The Europeans who visit the coast of Madagascar will find it difficult to believe that in the centre of the island, but thirty miles from the sea, is a country hitherto unknown, in which, although it is surrounded by brutish and savage peoples, there is more light, more industry, more active policy, and where the arts more advanced than at the coast. . . . I have no doubt whatever that the Hova will receive with friendship and gratitude any Europeans who will come among them in order to instruct them in the use of crafts and arts, for no other people of Madagascar has such a natural intelligence, nor so much aptitude for work.'

Mayeur, who had hoped to return soon to Tananarive in order to establish regular trade relations, was prevented from doing so until eight years later, when in 1785 he revisited that town with definite instructions from the Government. In spite of the Hova King's readiness to comply with most of the demands—such as protection for the foreigners, the prohibition of fabricating false coins etc.—the negotiations did not result in anything. He refused permission for the French to

<sup>1</sup> Till the French occupation called Antananarivo, which means 'City of a thousand', but of what has never been known; possibly warriors.

<sup>2</sup> Farquhar Collection, op. cit. Add. MS. 18135.

build a fortified village at the frontier of Imerina, and declined to safeguard their merchandise against attack and pillage.

The King considered these demands an infringement of his sovereignty, and of his subjects' independence. A deadlock was hereby created.

Everything changed in Imerina with the advent to power of a great warrior and astute statesman. Events moved rapidly after Andrianampoinimerina,<sup>1</sup> King of Ambohimanga, had succeeded in merging all the small Hova kingdoms into one. In 1794 Tananarive became the capital of a realm which, within a few years, developed into the leading kingdom of Madagascar. It has been said of this thirteenth ruler of his dynasty 'that he became great rather by his genius for organizing than by his conquests. Illiterate, ignorant of all the sciences which guide civilized governments, he discovered by his own innate good sense that which could best further the welfare, peace, greatness, and progress of his people.'<sup>2</sup>

No domain of life, public or private, was overlooked in his laws. . . . Wishing to associate his people in his rule, and to let his sovereignty rest on popular consent, he made the Kabary or Public Assembly a regular institution, where laws were framed, decisions for going to war discussed, etc. etc. Every one was free to express an opinion, and to take part in the discussions, which were led by the chiefs.

The King created an advisory body of eighty members, chosen from among the chiefs, who acted both as councillors to him, and as his representatives in the country. He fostered trade by the institution of markets, to be held daily in rota in various places. To prevent fraud, he fixed a standard for weights and measures. To facilitate the transport of merchandise, he had a canal dug between the two chief cities. In order to further agriculture, great dykes were built to hem in

<sup>1</sup> Malagasy names of persons being exceedingly long, and for any one not speaking that language, unpronounceable, I have omitted deliberately all those not absolutely required. The same holds good with regard to names of places, which are a combination of words descriptive of the situation: 'near a lake', 'a mountain', etc., etc. Equally, tribal names usually specify the occupation of the tribe or the nature of the country inhabited—'those who live by the sea and catch fish', etc., etc.

<sup>2</sup> P. Malzac, Tananarive, 1912. *Histoire de Royaume Hova depuis ses origines jusqu'à sa fin*. Composed from native records, written and oral, this book gives on pp. 30 and 31 the chronology of the rule of the various Hova rulers, beginning at 1300.

the rivers. During his reign harvests were abundant and famine unknown.

The King hoped to compel his people by rigorous laws to be honest and sober. Any one catching a thief had the right to kill him. Drinking rum and smoking hemp were prohibited, and at one time even the use of tobacco. The King, although terribly severe towards criminals, was humane towards captives of war. He usually set them free, hoping to win their allegiance by his leniency. However, if resistance continued, then the vanquished were sold as slaves.

In order to prevent the kingdom from being rent by rival factions after his death, he appointed his successor. His choice had fallen on his son Radama, a most promising, intelligent young man, and a first-rate warrior.

The King informed his counsellors of this decision and asked them to be to his son what they had been to him, for, so he declared: 'a king, surrounded by good councillors, makes his people happy'.

When he realized that his end was drawing near, the King made a long harangue to the councillors, as well as to his heir, whom he begged to be a worthy successor of his father and of all his ancestors. 'Strive to consolidate this kingdom,' he said, 'and to extend it. If you govern it well, and do not change anything I have done, you will be master over all the land. Radama, this kingdom has been raised to power in Imerina, but always bear in mind that there can be but one boundary to it, and that is the sea.'<sup>1</sup>

It was under such favourable auspices, and as the chosen heir of a great and wise ruler, who had been a veritable father to his people, that Radama, at eighteen years of age, became king of the Hovas. He inherited from his father not only a great kingdom, but in particular the idea of enlarging it by means of conquest, in order to extend his rule from shore to shore.

Little did King Radama think that to the First Consul, the new ruler of France, Madagascar was a matter of thought and consideration. Bonaparte, with a view to its possible use as a colony, had ordered his Minister of the Navy to submit to him a survey of all former French establishments on that

<sup>1</sup> E. Malzac, *op. cit.*

island; as also suggestions for the best means for founding a colony there.

The Minister, avoiding the Charybdis of optimistic enthusiasm, which had so often proved fatal in former days, and the Scylla of pessimistic belittlement, equally harmful, presented practical suggestions. Among these was the desirability of retaining the settlements of Fort Dauphin and at Foulpointe, but independent of the authorities of the Ile de France. He advocated the development of direct trade between these posts on the coast of Madagascar and Mozambique, whence slaves were sent to that island, as well as with Muscat and Surat.

The Minister stated, as his own personal conviction, that Madagascar might prove useful as a penal settlement, and be for France what Australia was for England.

Not satisfied with this rather general reply, Bonaparte demanded more details, which the numerous memoranda reposing in the archives of the Ministry supplied.

Among these documents was also the text of a book M. de Cossigny had published.<sup>1</sup> He pointed out that the chief importance of Madagascar consisted in its geographical situation—on the route to India.

For the writer of *Reflections on Madagascar*, this island was the key to India. France, so he contended, would carry on lucrative trade with the East Indies only on condition of having a great colony in the Indian Ocean.

He pointed out that the Ile de France could never have a sufficient population to fulfil that purpose, while Madagascar, on the contrary, had an enormous one. Therefore, all that was required was to civilize it by introducing European civilization.

'It is in Madagascar', he wrote, 'that we shall find in time of need a militia of brave men for defensive and offensive use in India. It is in Madagascar that with time we shall create nurseries for sailors, while her forests, turned into ships, will serve to increase the trade of our nation with India, whereby we can ruin that of our rivals; in time of peace by competition, and during war as corsairs or in hostile expeditions.'<sup>2</sup>

In 1803 General Decaen had become Governor-General of

<sup>1</sup> M. de Cossigny, *Reflexions sur Madagascar, Moyens d'ameliorer la Colonie*.

<sup>2</sup> Farquhar Collection Brit. Mus. Add. MS. 18135, also in Archives du Ministère des Colonies at Paris.

the Ile de France. Bonaparte had sent him out after the Treaty of Amiens had been signed and a lull had followed the storm.

The General did all that lay within him to further direct trade between the colony he governed and Madagascar, whence all the cattle, rice and slaves were derived also by Bourbon. On the advice of so experienced a man as M. Mayeur, Tamatave was chosen as the chief centre.

One of the most respected traders, M. Chardenaux, was deputed by to ask General Decaen for thirty soldiers and some respectable Creoles, and to place the whole settlement under the authority of a naval officer.

Uninterrupted intercourse and well-regulated trade between Madagascar and the colonies had by 1807 become of vital importance, as agriculture on the Ile de France and Bourbon had suffered from a terrible drought.

Another complication had arisen with regard to the increased prices demanded by the Malagasy for slaves, rice and oxen. Acting on the suggestions made in M. Mayeur's memorial, the General took matters in hand and organized a more co-ordinated commercial activity in Madagascar. He appointed M. Mariette, a former officer of the merchant fleet, Commercial Agent, with jurisdiction over all the French settlements from the Bay of Antongil to the River Mananhary. The primary object was to secure and uphold friendly relations with the various chiefs, as well as to try to make them live in peace with each other; and to do the same for the European traders. Twenty-five soldiers were put at the Agent's disposal, who, being Creoles, could reasonably be expected to resist the climate.

Any suspicions the presence of these soldiers might arouse in the mind of the Chief of Tamatave, were to be allayed by explaining it as in no way intended against him, but against external foes. In order 'not to expose oneself to insults from the English by ostentatiously appearing at Foulpointe and Tamatave, it was decided to establish the new post at Lake Nossibé, which seemed a likely place to become one day an important centre'.

General Decaen wrote to Bonaparte with regard to Madagascar: 'I am studying the immediate advantages which France might secure from that immense and fertile island if governed by you.'

The General sent an engineer to reconnoitre the coasts of Madagascar in order to discover which port could best serve France, and facilitate getting possession of these coasts.

General Decaen divided the French settlements into two parts—north and south, each under a special agent. For these posts he drew up rules for policy and keeping order; for hitherto no such regulations had existed.

He fortified Tamatave and gave it a garrison. He even wished that a corps of National Guards should be formed by the French residents.

He prepared plans for a canal to supply Tamatave with water. To pay for this expense, a tax was levied on the export of slaves. The money thus raised was used also for other works of public utility, which were to be carried out by criminals condemned at the Ile de France to deportation.

On the death of M. Mariette, Sylvain Roux, a former naval officer, at that time a trader, was appointed in his stead.

In his report to General Decaen, M. Chardenaux wrote: 'His arrival has caused the greatest satisfaction. Europeans and natives alike have welcomed him with joy. His gentle and peaceful manner inspires confidence. The natives who said, "We have lost a brother in M. Mariette," now say, "We shall find another one in M. Roux." I have no doubt whatever that this is what he desires himself.'

General Decaen, who was a pronounced enemy of the slave trade, would have been happy to see it completely suppressed. The slave trade, which had been officially abolished in the Ile de France in 1794, had been carried on nevertheless, clandestinely, during the time of the Revolution. Then, in 1802, Bonaparte made it again legal for the colonies beyond the Cape of Good Hope. Therefore, as matters stood, all the General could do was to see to it that this traffic with Madagascar was carried on as fairly as possible.

Sylvain Roux, an honest man, and one who held similar views, endured much annoyance from the slave traders, as he took his jurisdiction over the Europeans very seriously. The new agent frequently used his authority to expel some undesirable man, without regard to his social status. Indeed, relations between Sylvain Roux, whose choice the General never regretted, and the traders were not of the happiest, so



that the latter had to advise him to have patience, 'as it is impossible to expect to be able to re-establish order all at once, where licence has been reigning for so long'.

The orders to live in harmony with the chiefs and to prevent wars, Sylvain Roux carried out as best as he could. His anxiety to establish French influence permanently made the various chiefs objects of great and vital interest to him. Jealousy, however, broke out among the chiefs of Tamatave and Foulpointe. The French agent had made his headquarters at Tamatave, which he considered in every way preferable, both as to climate and trade facilities. If he could have had his own way he would have given up altogether the establishment at Foulpointe. His idea was to divert the slave trade from Foulpointe to Tamatave—the seaport for Imerina. The two ports to which negroes were brought from Mozambique were Bombetok and Majunga. The Sakalava took them from these central markets, together with their oxen, to Foulpointe. Sylvain Roux believed it to be possible to win the Sakalava over to his scheme—once he had entered into direct communication with the Queen of the Sakalava. Two Frenchmen had lately penetrated into her realm.

General Decaen held different opinions on that point, and therefore, although that queen was visited, nothing was achieved. Sylvain Roux nevertheless persisted in his aim to make the Hovas of Imerina the principal intermediaries for the trade with negroes, as Bombetok could be reached from their capital in five days. He was of the same opinion as the traders, that the Hovas were the least savage of the tribes of Madagascar.

Several traders had been well received by their ruler, but difficulties had arisen owing to Radama's sudden refusal to accept, as hitherto, cotton in payment for slaves. He now demanded piastres, a demand Sylvain Roux refused even to consider; and relations became strained. Other complications arose from perpetual revolts of tribes. This led to repressive campaigns by the ruler of the Hovas, who made wars also on other great tribes; pillage and slave raiding was the rule. These wars of extermination between the peoples of the south and of the north were common occurrences, but if the supply of slaves was thereby increased, ordinary trade suffered severely from these conditions.

Meanwhile French influence steadily increased in Tamatave, where, on 20th August 1807, Napolcon's birthday was celebrated with due ceremony in honour of 'the greatest Emperor of the World'. On this occasion the Chief of Tamatave had donned a fine uniform, sent him by General Decaen.

The war between England and France had its repercussion in the waters of the Indian Ocean. For a short period intercourse between Madagascar and the Ile de France was completely suspended, owing to the presence of British warships, sent to blockade that colony.

General Decaen thought seriously of evacuating all Frenchmen from Tamatave, but this was not done, as Sylvain Roux had succeeded in building a small fort at Tagnion.

The French flag, therefore, continued to fly on the shores of Madagascar, as it had done ever since the days of Louis XIII.



PART II  
MADAGASCAR IN ANGLO-FRENCH  
DIPLOMACY



## Chapter I

### HIS EXCELLENCY GOVERNOR FARQUHAR AND MADAGASCAR

MEANWHILE the Supreme Government in India had decided to remove the French flag at all costs from the Eastern seas. The loss caused to British trade by French privateers and cruisers amounted for the last few years to many millions sterling.

The conquest of the Ile de France and of Bourbon was to be undertaken in earnest.

In anticipation of this conquest Lord Minto had appointed a former Administrator of Dutch possessions in the Eastern Archipelago, Robert Townsend Farquhar, Governor of the French islands in the Indian seas.

The small island of Roderigue, on which two French families with some eighty slaves were living, was at once occupied together with that of Bourbon. After a heroic stand, General Suzanne was forced to capitulate. In token of the regard in which he was held by the victor, he did so with honours, he and his officers being permitted to keep their swords and military medals.

This is not the place to tell the story of those days of tragedy and heroism on the part of the French garrison. Although General Abercromby had not the slightest doubt in respect of the issue of an attack upon the town of Port Louis, he accepted nevertheless General Decaen's offer to capitulate. He did it, so he wrote to the Secretary of State, 'from the desire of sparing the lives of many brave officers and men, and out of regard to the interest of the inhabitants of this island'. The terms of the capitulation were in conformity with the spirit of the instructions given him 'with the single exception that the garrison were not made prisoners of war'.<sup>1</sup>

General Decaen had demanded this because, when seven years previously the First Consul had given him instructions

<sup>1</sup> 3rd December 1810, *General Abercromby to Lord Minto*. I.O. Home Misc. Series.

for just such an eventuality, they contained this proviso—‘if capitulation—then with honour’.

That very same day Vice-Admiral Bertie wrote to the Hon. John Wilson Croker,<sup>1</sup> Secretary of the Admiralty, to inform him of the taking of the Ile de France, that the fleet consisted of 70 sail, that the land and sea forces would not be considered prisoners of war, but were to be conveyed at British expense, with their families, to some port in France; private property to be respected and the inhabitants to maintain their religion, customs and laws.

Mr. R. T. Farquhar, who at once assumed control as Governor of the Ile de France, wrote in his report to Lord Minto that ‘the success of the naval and military operations has added a most important colony to the Dominions of His Majesty, and wrested from the enemy one of his most destructive means of annoying the British commerce eastward of the Cape of Good Hope’.

He mentions that the transference of government had been effected in perfect tranquillity. In fact, the only outward difference visible the next day was the colour of the uniforms—red, instead of blue!

How acute the sufferings of the colony had been becomes apparent from the Governor’s remark a few days after the capitulation: ‘I am happy to add that the inhabitants have already ample reason to rejoice at a transition from a state bordering on famine and slavery to the blessings of abundance and liberty, which are enjoyed by all those who have the happiness to live under the British protection.’

On Christmas Day 1810 he wrote: ‘The island is now as quiet and in good order as if it had never been attacked.’

It was no easy task which confronted the British Governor. Fortunately he had much experience in matters colonial. His colonial career in the Eastern Archipelago had not lacked occasion for initiative, patriotism and humanity to find full play.

Born in 1776, the son of a renowned physician, and grandson of a Scottish minister, Robert Farquhar had come out to Bengal in 1796 as assistant under the accountant of the Board of Revenue. A year later he accompanied Admiral Rainer as interpreter on his successful expedition against the Dutch in

<sup>1</sup> Great-uncle by marriage of the author’s husband.

the Malay Archipelago, and 'in consequence of the zeal and assiduity he evinced', he was appointed Deputy Commercial Resident at Amboyna and Banda,<sup>1</sup> and, a year later, Governor of the Moluccas. In 1801 the first opportunity for the exercise of initiative came his way, when 'in conjunction with the commanding officer, he made a successful attack on the island of Ternate, conceiving that its possession would be a valuable acquisition for the Company'. He recognized the Sultan, who had been a vassal of the Dutch, as an independent sovereign, and concluded a treaty with him, by which he secured the monopoly of the spice trade for the East India Company. He also declared the sultans of Tidore and Batchian independent sovereigns, and made like treaties with them. They, in their turn, solemnly swore for themselves and their successors that all nutmeg, mace and cloves collected annually was to be for the Company.

However profitable these treaties might have been from a commercial and colonial point of view, they were not acceptable from the diplomatic. The Government of Madras expressed their dissatisfaction and deemed it right to alter the arrangement which existed for the administration of the Molucca Islands, by appointing Colonel Oliver to the charge of the entire administration.<sup>2</sup>

Farquhar, considering it derogatory to be limited to purely commercial functions, resigned and returned to Madras. Later on he was appointed 'Commissioner for conducting the restitution of the Eastern settlements of the Dutch, in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty of Amiens'.

It must have been with a sore heart that, in February 1803, he had to see the treaties he had made in 1801 with those sultans dissolved. The Government, however, felt 'that they could not justly maintain a right to preserve the permanent benefit of territorial cessions acquired under the influence of the temporary power of the Molucca Islands,' as the treaty provided 'an unreserved and unqualified restitution of the Dutch possession of these islands'.

When in December 1810 Robert Farquhar entered upon his duties, he had to face a dilemma. By a law promulgated in

<sup>1</sup> I.O. Personal Records, vol. viii.

<sup>2</sup> I.O. Personal Records, vol. viii.



1807 the export trade of slaves in British possessions had been made illegal.

The anti-slavery movement was deeply stirring British public opinion. From small beginnings, in 1786, when the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge offered a prize for the best Latin essay on the slave trade, this movement had grown till the British conscience awakened to the blot on its honour. England, however, had not been first in the field, for Denmark had prohibited the slave trade in 1772, and in France 'la Société des Amis des Noirs' had early raised its voice, supported by Lafayette and Mirabeau before any one did so publicly in England; but since then the massacres of St. Domingo and then the Napoleonic wars, kept the problem of slavery in the background. In England, on the other hand, it had meanwhile become a matter of vital importance.

The great leaders of this movement did not urge a sudden emancipation, only preparatory measures. It took twenty-six years' agitation, with frequent interpellations in Parliament, till emancipation became a fact, and £20,000,000 were spent in achieving this epoch-making result.

When Mr. Farquhar assumed the governorship of the Ile de France, which was re-named Mauritius, the first problem which demanded his attention was that of slavery.

The terms of the capitulation guaranteed the continuance of local customs, of which slavery and the slave trade formed part.

The law abolishing slavery, which the Convention had passed in 1794, had never been fully applied in the Ile de France and in Bourbon. In 1800 Bonaparte had given orders for the gradual suppression of slavery, but they had been withheld by the Minister, who wished to see peace well established before such far-reaching measures were to be introduced into those two distant colonies.

The terrible massacre of thousands of colonists in St. Domingo by the freed slaves aroused justified apprehension in the hearts of all French colonists. All that those of Bourbon and of the Ile de France wanted was the assurance of safety, and the certainty that there would be no sudden abolition of slavery.

It was a vexed question, and apparently impossible to settle to the satisfaction of every one. Bonaparte finally decided upon

a two-fold *modus vivendi*. In the colonies where the liberation of the slaves had been applied, there the latter were to remain free. Those colonies, however, which by the Treaty of Amiens had been returned to France, and where slavery still existed—there nothing was to be done for the time being.

At the moment when Robert Farquhar took up his governorship in Mauritius public opinion in England was greatly exercised with regard to the emancipation of the slaves.

In the French colony he was now to administer as a British possession, no one thought much about this question; no more and no less than English planters in the West Indies had done.

Individuals, also, while in the Ile de France, had been fully alive to the evil of the slave trade; only to mention the Count de Maudave, M. de Cossigny, General Decaen, Sylvain Roux.

The slave trade had been introduced into Madagascar, as a regular and profitable commerce, by the pirates of the island of Ste Marie.

The author of *Paul et Virginie*, Bernardin de St. Pierre,<sup>1</sup> who came to the Ile de France with the Count de Maudave, in 1773, was horrified at the callousness of the beautiful ladies, who, so he wrote, 'weep when watching a tragedy being enacted on the stage, but enjoy pleasure and comfort paid for by the tears and blood of men'—slaves brought from Madagascar.

This statement Governor Farquhar found to be only too true. With his sympathetic nature and understanding heart he had quickly come into touch with the inhabitants of Port Louis. He realized that the immediate introduction of the abolition of slavery would be catastrophic for the economic life, as well as a terrible danger to society by letting loose a horde of people not able to maintain themselves.<sup>2</sup>

Here was a dilemma: by conviction a wholehearted supporter of the anti-slavery movement, he was now faced by unsurmountable barriers to putting his ideals into practice.

In this conflict of duty and feeling, he wrote to the Secretary of State for the Colonies<sup>3</sup> concerning 'the subject of slavery, in itself so important, and as it relates to these colonies now held

<sup>1</sup> *Un Officier du Roi* (Bernardin de St Pierre), *Voyage de l'Isle de France et à l'Isle Bourbon*. Amsterdam, 1773.

<sup>2</sup> Hansard, 11th June 1833.

<sup>3</sup> Report to the Earl of Liverpool. P.R.O. Mauritius C.O. 167, vol. v. 15th January 1811.

under Capitulation, so peculiarly interesting.' He deemed it proper to mention in regard to himself that he is 'not by any means disposed to be a supporter of slavery, but political considerations and immediate duty call upon him to forward this communication . . . to which he asks an immediate answer. Notwithstanding the British Slave Act, His Majesty was', so he understood, 'pleased to suffer and sanction the slave trade in Trinidad or some other places in the West Indies.' What of Mauritius? By the capitulation, existing laws and customs had been guaranteed, and the use of slaves was included in both. He felt that 'so momentous an alteration as the abolition of slavery would be setting oneself against the terms of the Capitulation, and to do so requires the authority of the Crown, if not of Legislature'. He therefore had done all he could to introduce alleviations, as demanded by the principles of humanity and Christianity, yet being 'against an untimely display of sympathy, as the idea was rife that once with England all slaves would be released'. He mentions that he had seen to it that chains were made lighter, and punishments less severe. He concluded this letter by stating that 'while awaiting the answer from London, he would continue along these lines'.

In this same letter he wrote also concerning settlements in Madagascar 'which may offer fresh subjects of consideration and will perhaps lead to consequences more important than on a cursory view could be imagined.'

The question of Madagascar had become acute from the very start. Arising from a difference of opinion between the Governor and Vice-Admiral Bertie, who 'on New Year's Eve had given orders to the officer commanding H.M.S. *Nisus* to proceed to Madagascar for the purpose of taking possession of that settlement; of bringing away the French garrison, and also, not only destroying any fortifications which may have been erected by the French on that island', but of bringing away or destroying any depots of stores, ammunitions or provisions which he might find there.<sup>1</sup>

When Mr. Farquhar received this letter he was exceedingly astonished at what he described as 'an unprecedented and curious proceeding on the part of Vice-Admiral Bertie, to order the destruction of all these French possessions which might be

<sup>1</sup> P.R.O. C.O. 167, 31st December 1810, Appendix.

found at an immediate dependency of the Ile de France'. His remonstrance proved vain, for the Admiral 'judged' that his orders were in conformity with the articles of the capitulation.

Mr. Farquhar wrote to the Earl of Liverpool to report on the Admiral's action concerning Madagascar, giving a résumé of what course in his opinion it would be advisable to pursue with respect to Madagascar. 'There can be no doubt of the necessity of our immediately establishing a post on that island—if alone for the purpose of giving security to the merchants who carry on the only trade that offers a supply of cattle to the island. This post should be protected against the natives, no less than against any marauding privateers, who may here often venture to the Eastward from the Cape of Good Hope and seek for plunder or provisions on such a fruitful island.'

He mentions the advisability of making a survey of the latest means adopted by the French, as well as of their establishments. He enumerates the places frequented by them: the Bay of Antongil, Teneriffe, Foulpointe, Tamatave, St. Luce and Fort Dauphin, with some 25 Frenchmen in all. He enumerates the articles for exchange: 'oxen, rice, copal-gum, slaves, a small quantity of wax and tortoiseshell; also good salted provisions which can be easily cured at a moderate price at Tamatave'. He notes that the French purchased slaves with Spanish dollars, oxen and rice with arak, gunpowder and fire-locks, etc. etc. Tamatave is presented as a place of importance. General Decaen had 'sent troops there, who, not having been provided with beds and huts, nor utensils for baking bread, had perished from want of essentials and necessities, and, but for the assistance rendered by the local merchants, would all have succumbed'.

He reports the fact of M. de Cossigny having been sent in 1808 to draw plans for a fort to protect the roads and oppose incursions of savages; that this gentleman had demonstrated to the General that it would not be difficult to drain the surrounding marshes, by causing the River Mandanghuris to pass through Tamatave; to cut down the trees beyond the fort and thus remove all causes of sickness. The plans, though good, had not been carried out; nevertheless the agent,

<sup>1</sup> I.O. Dispatch to the Governors in Council at Fort St. George, 27th December 1810.

M. Sylvain Roux, had borrowed slaves from the merchants to build a fort.

Two weeks after the capitulation Mr. Farquhar notified to the authorities in India his decision to occupy the French settlements in Madagascar.

The Admiral's orders had evidently not been carried out at once, for it was not till January 24th that H.M. War Sloop *Eclipse* appeared before Tamatave, when Captain Lynne sent a letter to M. Sylvain Roux, the 'Civil Commissioner of the French Government', in which he announced to him the surrender of the Ile de France and its dependencies; at the same time summoning him to deliver up the fort at Tamatave, and all other places under his orders, on the same terms as the capitulation accorded to General Decaen.

For the sake of humanity Captain Lynne hoped that M. Roux would at once agree, since, at the least sign of resistance, he would use force of arms. 'If but one single shot was fired, every one would be made prisoner of war.' In his report to Paris, Sylvain Roux mentions that having read the capitulation, in which he found several points not relevant to his position, he had nevertheless no choice but to accede to everything which concerned the garrison and the French inhabitants of Madagascar.<sup>1</sup>

In his report to the Secretary of State, Governor Farquhar mentions Captain Lynne 'having taken possession of Tamatave and landing troops, the French commandant having accepted, without opposition, the terms upon which the Ile de France capitulated; this has freed these seas from the last French flag, and secured to us an unmolested traffic into the fruitful and abundant island of Madagascar'.<sup>2</sup>

Henceforth Mr. Farquhar's one purpose with regard to it would be 'the consolidation of British power, where the French had hitherto been predominant'.

There were two means for doing this: the economic and the political; the former by immediate and well-regulated trade relations, through accredited agents; the latter, by keeping all French subjects from returning to their former settlements. Both methods he hoped to put into operation by founding

<sup>1</sup> 18th February 1811. Col. Archives, Paris, Carton X.

<sup>2</sup> 2nd April 1811, op. cit.

colonies. He therefore wrote to London that 'a British settlement in Madagascar, judiciously managed, would prove healthy, as it is the most fruitful country in the world. It would afford ease and plenty to a variety of poor colonists in a very short period of time under British protection.'<sup>1</sup> 'But', so he wrote, 'these are remote considerations, worthy of the mature deliberations of higher authorities, to whom the subject will be referred.'

Meanwhile he could not do anything till the official confirmation of his nomination as Governor of Mauritius had come from London. General Warde, temporarily in command, withdrew the British forces from Madagascar, 'leaving the few Europeans there at the mercy of the natives'. The moment Mr. Farquhar was again in authority, he 'made it his aim to protect British subjects and their possessions, and at the same time to remove the French or, at all events, to annul their influence'. He proposed to establish a military post at Tamatave, with a garrison of 80 sepoys, and twenty to thirty Europeans 'trained to the great guns', and a number of officers. He was going to avoid the mistakes made by the French in their attempts at settlements, by always having had too small a garrison. He would provide security, comfort and hygienic conditions—huts and bedding would be ready for use on landing. However, this plan was not carried out; but he appointed M. Rondeaux 'Civil Commissioner of the Island of Madagascar' to supervise the supplies sent out for the troops, and the export of provisions to Mauritius.

The problem of slavery in the new British colony was evidently troubling the Secretary of State. Or had Governor Farquhar's questions concerning his attitude of caution perplexed him? That this seems to have been the case may be assumed, for in a letter dated 15th October 1811 Mr. Farquhar leaves no doubt as to his own attitude towards it. He assures the Earl of Liverpool that he had not favoured the slave trade; had not permitted any importation; that those slaves only had come in from Madagascar specially mentioned in the capitulation with Sylvain Roux, namely 860 in all, belonging to private persons. On having taken legal advice it was sanctioned for the French traders to come with their personal slaves

<sup>1</sup> P.R.O. Mauritius C.O. 167. Appendix to Report XI.

to Mauritius, but in order to prevent new importations two cruisers were keeping watch, 'every possible means having been taken to enforce the Slave Act with the utmost rigours'.<sup>1</sup>

Deeply impressed by the importance of Madagascar as a British possession, Governor Farquhar realized that for the fullest exploitation of its riches that island and its inhabitants had to be known and understood. Where his French predecessors in the Ile de France had so frequently failed, he meant to succeed. He had the good fortune to secure the cordial and efficient assistance from former officials. Thus, by his orders, M. Lislet Geoffrey made a chart of Madagascar, utilizing all the documents he had collected previously 'to correct doubtful positions laid down in these islands, and to fix new discoveries, while in charge of the charts and journals of the country'.<sup>2</sup> His experience was now to provide accurate knowledge of the route for British trade with India, hitherto so fraught with danger, because of the dangerous places around Madagascar. But apart from commercial interest, there were strategical reasons to be considered.

His desire to further the knowledge of Madagascar from every point of view led the Governor to secure the services of a former French officer, M. de Froberville,<sup>3</sup> whom he commissioned to study every memorandum in the Archives concerning Madagascar, to make résumés of them, to prepare reports on any matter of interest in this regard, as well as to complete a lexicon, a dictionary, and a grammar of the language of 'the Madecasses'.

These arduous labours M. de Froberville carried out conscientiously 'in order to assist the Governor to discover the best means for immediate measures to extend British rule in this dependency of Mauritius'.

The Governor found another ready helper in Baron d'Unienville, Keeper of the Archives, who considered this search for information by the new governor as due 'to the desire to discover means for a better execution of the Anti-Slavery law,

<sup>1</sup> Yet in 1828 Sir Robert Farquhar was attacked in Parliament by Mr. Fowell Buxton for having upheld, and even favoured, slave trade, of which unwarranted accusation Sir Robert made a dignified refutation.

<sup>2</sup> Lislet Geoffrey, *Memoir and Notice explanatory of a Chart of Madagascar*. London, 1819.

<sup>3</sup> Farquhar Collection, op. cit., Barthélemy Huet, Chevalier de Froberville.

and even more for the various considerations of the value which Madagascar had for the new British possessions'.<sup>1</sup>

From one of the reports made for Mr. Farquhar, undated and anonymous,<sup>2</sup> it becomes apparent that his plans were laudable from the patriotic-colonial point of view, but liable to lead to diplomatic complications.

The writer of this report starts from the premise that the 'Project for a Colony on the Island of Madagascar' concerns a maritime power in possession of Mauritius, a necessary base for upholding a new settlement on a neighbouring island, where great difficulties might arise from within and from without. . . . Thus a nation which possesses the greatest naval forces desirous of making of Madagascar a colony . . . the question is by what means to make the whole island a colony subject to England? Is the King of England going to claim from the King of France a sovereignty acquired by him, by taking possession of the island a century and a half ago? By what title will the King of England revive rights which the King of France has for a long time not made use of or preserved? Can it be expected that the chiefs and the inhabitants will submit of their own free will to the English? This cannot be hoped for. If a single monarch were in authority over the whole extent of the island, he might possibly be won over to yield his crown to the king and people of Great Britain. At present numerous independent chiefs rule over a multitude of peoples who have each their own ideas. . . . It is thus unthinkable that by mere persuasion these chiefs will hand over their country to a foreign king. On the other hand, to conquer them by force of arms, in order to add Madagascar to the number of English possessions would not be considered legitimate in this century. Also these people have been for a century in alliance with the French Government.'

After enumerating the difficulties of climate and soil, he states that it might be quite possible for a whole army to perish without even having met the enemy.

The author of this report writes: 'As it is thus not by right of conquest that England must take Madagascar—what then would be the best means for the power possessing

<sup>1</sup> D'Unienville, *Statistiques de l'Ile Maurice*, pt. iv, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Farquhar Collection of MSS., op. cit.



Mauritius, and those which alone could maintain the budding colony?’

He suggests many small military settlements which the French have held, especially at the island of Ste Marie ‘which belongs to France by solemn cession by the kings of Foulpointe in 1750’.<sup>1</sup> Ships, pilots and artisans (these latter convicts from India) would be required; also, if possible, doctors and missionaries should be sent out, ‘who by their good deeds would attach the natives to themselves, and would thereby make them forget that an alien Government tries to subjugate them and to extend the domination of their country’. The report concludes by making it a *sine qua non* that the new settlements in Madagascar, as well as on the island of Ste Marie, must depend on the Governor of Mauritius.<sup>2</sup>

Here was a programme after the heart of Governor Farquhar, which he hoped to carry out as soon as circumstances would permit. No thought of opposition to this scheme even suggested itself to him, especially as the Ile de France with its dependencies had just been ceded for ever to Great Britain.

<sup>1</sup> These documents addressed to the Government of the Ile de France are deposited in the archives of that colony. Unfortunately the author had not the time, when on a short visit to Mauritius, to study the whole set of documents, kindly put at her disposal by H.E. the British Governor.

<sup>2</sup> Farquhar Collection, op. cit. MS. 18136.

## *Chapter II*

### DIPLOMATIC COMPLICATIONS

ON 30th May 1814, a Treaty of Peace and Amity had been signed in Paris between His Britannic Majesty and His Most Christian Majesty. According to paragraph eight the King of England engaged himself to restore to France all her colonies, fisheries, factories and establishments of every kind possessed by her on the 1st of January 1792 in the seas and on the continents of America, Africa and Asia with the exception, however, of the islands of Tobago and St Lucie and of the Ile de France and its dependencies, especially Rodriguez and the Seychelles.<sup>1</sup>

Under this article the Ile de Bourbon was formally delivered over in April 1815 to commissioners appointed by His Christian Majesty; but in all the proceedings on this subject the island of Bourbon and its fortifications alone were mentioned.<sup>2</sup> Concerning Madagascar not a word was said. The cession of the Ile de France to England made it incumbent upon Governor Farquhar to issue a proclamation<sup>3</sup> confirming the laws and ordinances which had been passed in former years by the French Government, for the dependencies of Mauritius, in which he reckoned Madagascar. He therefore specified certain ordinances affecting that island.

He was greatly astonished to receive a communication<sup>4</sup> from General de Bouvet, Governor of Bourbon, who emphatically opposed the assumption that Madagascar had become a British possession in virtue of the Treaty. He based his contention on the fact that France had never claimed sovereignty over Madagascar, having had there merely settlements for trade; that the two India companies who had successively held the sovereignty of the islands of France and of Bourbon, had never claimed the same rights over Madagascar; that His Majesty had always recognized the sovereignty of the

<sup>1</sup> State Papers. British and Foreign, 1812-14.

<sup>2</sup> P.R.O. Mauritius C.O. 167, vol. cxv.

<sup>3</sup> 27th April 1815.

<sup>4</sup> 1st July 1815. Farquhar Collection, Brit. Mus. Add. MS. 18135, folio 98.

princes of the country, and his representatives had traded with them as one trades with independent people; that there had been a commerce of barter between two strange populations; that in the orders given to General Decaen Madagascar was not mentioned, and its peoples were not placed under his jurisdiction.

The fact that there had been Commercial Agents only, was proof that the French Government did not consider itself as wielding sovereignty, because such agents are found only in countries where one does not rule; that France had no more right to Madagascar than to China, where she had established herself at Canton for the trade of barter. To consider Madagascar as a dependency of Mauritius because Sylvain Roux, under threat, had surrendered on the strength of the capitulation presented him, did not alter the nature of things, and it was impossible for a Commercial Agent to transfer to some one else territorial rights which his own sovereign did not possess.

The General concluded his statement by mentioning that 'had Madagascar, that vast island, been considered a dependency of the Ile de France, it would have been mentioned specifically, as had been the case with the Seychelles and the small island of Rodriguez. That Madagascar had not been mentioned was proof positive that it had been considered what it was *de facto*—an independent country.'

This letter caused genuine surprise to Governor Farquhar. It put a completely new aspect on his relations towards Madagascar, and for a moment he thought of suggesting to the Governor of Bourbon—pending new orders from England—a provisional arrangement with him, by which the inhabitants of Bourbon would be at liberty to trade with Madagascar. He knew how dependent that colony was on food supply from there, but then suddenly the whole weight of the slave trade problem overpowered him, intensified by that fundamental divergence of attitude towards it; for what was prohibited in Mauritius was lawful in Bourbon. Therefore he felt that 'he could not incur the weighty responsibility of acquiescence even for a moment, in any measure by which the inhabitants of Bourbon would be admitted to establish any commercial relations in places which had been previously open to that

traffic, and over which he had every reason to consider, that the authority of the Government confided to his care, extended'.

He also wrote to this effect to the Secretary of State for the Colonies,<sup>1</sup> and in proof of his point that 'the French had the continuous exercise of undisputed sovereignty over Madagascar', he sent him copies 'of all the authentic documents, acts and instruments at Mauritius, concerning Madagascar since 1635'. He assured the Minister that he should 'continue cautiously to avoid giving the native chiefs any cause of jealousy, or dissatisfaction with the British Government'.

To the Governor of Bourbon he wrote: 'I can not of my individual authority divest H.M. Crown of a portion of her territory.'

In a second letter, in reply to General de Bouvet's friendly overtures, one feels the intensity of conviction with which Mr. Farquhar wrote. 'No, I can not agree with you. I am obliged to consider Madagascar. I cannot authorize or permit a forbidden trade.'

Lenient towards the inhabitants of Mauritius with regard to their slaves, yet he shared to the full the horror of 'that heinous traffic'. With all his strength of mind and will he opposed it, and therefore he could not agree to the slightest compromise so long as it was sanctioned in Bourbon.

It is absolutely necessary to understand this point of view to be able to follow his policy towards Madagascar, for not Frenchmen as such did he view with antagonism. His daily actions towards the inhabitants of Mauritius proved this.

Governor Farquhar's abhorrence of this inhuman trade was the driving power of his policy towards Madagascar. It became almost a passion, an obsession of mind and heart. It was the cause of his dogged resistance displayed in everything concerning France and Madagascar.

This first exchange of letters was but the beginning of a correspondence carried on between him and the Governor of Bourbon on the one hand, and the Secretary of State for the Colonies on the other, which had its parallel in that of the French administrator of Bourbon with his chief in Paris. It was not enough that there was this correspondence, complicated as it was by the time it took for replies to reach the writers;

<sup>1</sup> P.R.O. Mauritius C.O. 167. 115.

there were also conversations between the ambassadors of the respective countries and the Foreign Offices. The topic for correspondence and conversations alike was provided by Governor Farquhar's iron determination 'to save the peoples of Madagascar from being handed over to the slave traders'.

In perusing these documents, one finds an extraordinary divergence of claims concerning the sovereignty of Madagascar. General de Bouvet denies any sovereignty over that island, the French Government asserts that France has the sovereignty over the whole east coast of the island; while Governor Farquhar persisted in considering it 'formerly under French rule, now under British'. His claim, apart from the documentary evidence he believed to have discovered, he based also on the fact that 'the whole of territory comprehended in the boundary of the dependencies of the Ile de France passed over to England with the exception of Bourbon'. These boundaries, so he discovered, had reached north to the equinoctial line, south to the latitude of the Cape; east to the meridian of the Point de Galle in Ceylon, west to the centre of the Channel of Mozambique. Within these boundaries lay the Seychelles, a thousand miles away from the administrative centre: how much more then Madagascar?

Governor Farquhar's letter to General de Bouvet led to representations from the French Government to the English Government, 'that the execution of the Treaty was incomplete until the French establishments on the coast of Madagascar were restored to her'. Thereupon Lord Bathurst instructed Governor Farquhar 'that measures were to be taken for delivering over to the French authorities in Bourbon whatever establishment the French had possessed in Madagascar in 1792'.<sup>1</sup>

But nothing was further from his intention, and if Nelson put his blind eye to the telescope, Mr. Farquhar turned a deaf ear to all orders from London.

Believing the moment to be propitious for establishing a military settlement in Madagascar, he chose Port Loquez, a fair trial having been given to this place during a military expedition in December 1815-January 1816.<sup>2</sup> No luck, however,

<sup>1</sup> October 1816.

<sup>2</sup> Lislet Geoffrey, op. cit. p. 53. 'Extrait du Journal du Lieutenant Vine'.

attended this attempt; for once more the natives massacred every one. Captain Lesage was sent to punish the guilty.

It must have been a bitter pill to Governor Farquhar to receive a communication from Lord Bathurst, 'that H.R.H. the Prince Regent had been pleased to concur in the construction which had been put by the French Government upon the details of the Treaty of 30th May 1814'.

Sylvain Roux,<sup>1</sup> at that time in Paris, wrote to Baron Portal to explain to him the importance of Madagascar for France, suggesting that an agreement be made, by which the English should have the west coast with the Bay of St. Augustine and the French the east coast, and thereby avoid all rivalry. Half a year later he writes again: 'The negotiations carried on with the British Government having ended to the advantage of France, who finds herself in possession of her Comptoirs—the moment is favourable to retake them and above all to putting into practice the great project so many times planned and so often abandoned, of colonizing that great island.'<sup>2</sup>

However, Sylvain Roux had reckoned without the Governor of Mauritius, who, beaten by diplomatic considerations, continued his policy of obstruction, always discovering new reasons for preventing the French from returning to Madagascar.

Scottish tenacity, blended with horror at the idea of another Power depriving Madagascar of the blessings and benefits he had meant to bestow on the inhabitants, regrets at the thought of losing all the advantages of possessing that island, crystallized into one powerful purpose, which resulted in a policy pregnant with future complications of far-reaching political import.

Governor Farquhar's whole nature rose in rebellion against the verdict of the Prince Regent's decision, and he, who had sent him voluminous documents to prove his contention that France had been sovereign Power over Madagascar, now asked the Governor of Bourbon to prove, by documentary evidence, what were the establishments France laid claim to. To Lord Bathurst he wrote:

'I also notified M. de Bouvet that the Government of the Ile de Ste Marie had not kept up any establishment, therefore the Government, holding no possessions whatever, it

<sup>1</sup> October 1816.

<sup>2</sup> Arch. Min. Col., Paris. November 1816.

did not appear to me that there remained anything to deliver.'

It is at this juncture that the international and the colonial interests once again clashed; Lord Bathurst, although admitting his personal agreement with his views, nevertheless wrote to suggest obedience to the Crown, 'which has to consider wider issues'.

To the Governor of Bourbon it seemed that, since the King of France had abolished the slave trade, 'there could be no longer any objection on those grounds, for the retrocession of the French Comptoirs, as they could not create any difficulties'. But the Governor remained adamant. M. de Bouvet reported this renewed refusal to Paris. The Duc de Richelieu therefore wrote to the British Ambassador that:

'The Governor of Mauritius has manifested repugnance to restore to His Most Christian Majesty the establishments which have been formed by subjects of France on the coast of Madagascar, and that the interpretation which he gives to the dispositions which I have just now reminded you of, is consistent neither with the text, nor with the spirit of the Treaty.'

Governor Farquhar now put forth a new reason for clinging to Madagascar, namely, 'that, as France had not any establishments, there were none to give back'.

This change of argument, so contrary to his first statements, was the result of his having read 'A Royal Warrant',<sup>1</sup> published in Paris, on 1st January 1792, which disclaims all right to dominion in the Island of Madagascar'.<sup>2</sup>

The French Government renewed its application, but again the doggedness of the Scot made him ignore orders, though this time they were merely 'not to oppose the resumption by the French of any establishment which they had possessed before 1792'. This was the least that could be done, 'for it had been previously convened between the French and English Governments', so the Foreign Office was reminded, 'that Madagascar was a neutral country, equally strange to the two Crowns, and the subjects of both sovereigns could trade there according to the laws of their country'.

<sup>1</sup> 11th November 1817. P.R.O. Mauritius C.O., op. cit.

<sup>2</sup> A footnote to C.O. 167, 118 states: 'In 1824 the original was discovered to be missing, and every effort made to discover some authentic copy of it was in vain.'

At one time Lord Bathurst had written: 'Should M. de Bouvet lay claim to territorial possessions, which I do not think he will do, be careful—let Bourbon trade with Madagascar.'

Not if Governor Farquhar could prevent it!

The next move, so aggravating to M. de Bouvet, was his reply that Madagascar belonged to the inhabitants, 'that it was for the French to make arrangements with them concerning the establishments'. This argument made M. de Bouvet ask the pertinent question: 'What constitutes possession? What claim had England in New Holland? When Captain Baudin was exploring her coasts the Governor of Botany Bay informed him that no foreign establishments would be tolerated. Thus, although England occupied very little territory, yet she claimed the whole.'

The controversy between the Governments of France and England concerning Madagascar continued for a few more years. When, in 1824, the whole correspondence was finally closed, a résumé of its content was made.<sup>1</sup> A note mentions:

'But surely, since England has admitted that she was under a misapprehension in claiming title to Madagascar at all, she is entitled to say that she was under an equal misapprehension as to the powers which she supposed to be annexed to the title.'

As early as March 1816 Governor Farquhar had offered to give French ships licences for trading with Madagascar, but national honour would not permit the Governor of Bourbon to agree to this. However, after the Prince Regent had acquiesced in the interpretation of France that Madagascar did not belong to Mauritius, the French flag was again seen in the harbours of Madagascar. The idea to found a colony with the surplus of the poor population of Bourbon was also taken into consideration by the governor of that island. It was felt, however, that it would be wise to make a special convention with England, 'to receive the assurance that there would be no interference'. The next sentence is an illustration of the proverb 'Once bit [alas, in his case many times] twice shy'—for it runs thus—'but it is doubtful whether we shall succeed in this.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> P.R.O. Mauritius. C.O. 167, 151. <sup>2</sup> Arch. Min. Col. Madagascar. Paris.



In spite of opposition, trade was being resumed. When at last it had been established and accepted by Governor Farquhar that Madagascar was not a British possession, M. de Bouvet wrote to him: 'I feel justified in asking you not to have any political relations with Madagascar.'

As lief ask a river to flow uphill; for it was exactly in the political relations with various chiefs that Governor Farquhar had discovered the most efficient means for carrying out his programme, which, so he was fully convinced, would be for the blessing of the inhabitants of that country. The only way to put down the slave trade was to cut it off at the source. He made it his definite purpose to attain this result, as the pitiful fate of the Malagasy was a burden on his heart. He had for them a paternal affection, and longed to give them a father's care and protection.

How best to do that he had discovered, thanks to M. de Froberville's search in the archives, where this officer had found copies of those numerous memoranda sent during the preceding century to Paris, and of some presented to the authorities of the Ile de France.

What the Count de Maudave and other believers in Madagascar had in vain suggested to their Government, that Governor Farquhar meant to carry out point by point. The Frenchmen had shown the way to the goal, which was his also, and therefore he very wisely intended following their lead.

Every memorandum submitted to him by the Chevalier he annotated, and every time any one left for Madagascar a questionnaire was given him to fill in. There were certain points on which His Excellency could never get sufficient enlightenment: namely, the right method to ensure the success of settlements in Madagascar, and how to introduce instruction and the knowledge of ordinary things among the natives. In every memorandum the answer he discovered concerning the first point was, 'by gentleness and friendliness on the part of the agents; by honesty and good faith in every transaction; by an inviolable respect for the property and customs of the people; by the sacredness of an oath'. The answer to the second query was invariably—by religion; to the third, by the example of the colonists and 'by teaching the Malagasy, who are quick to imitate, crafts and arts'.

There is an impressive reiteration in the manifold reports of just these points, however far the writers were separated by time. Alas, these wise maxims had not been sufficiently put into practice in the past, but Governor Farquhar meant to profit 'by the light which the mistakes of others shed'. He pondered over the trilogy which recurred again and again: gentleness, religion, the attraction of a peaceable life; religion, agriculture, commerce. He discovered the suggestion that operations in the settlement should be carried out under the auspices of 'the Benevolent Society of Madagascar', whose administrators were never to lose sight of the spirit of gentleness and moderation; also to bear in mind that no success could be expected except by unity among the leaders, and by great prudence and blameless morals in the co-operators, one and all to be picked men.

The Governor, eager in the cause of emancipation, must have read with great satisfaction the following words: 'In order that the advent of Europeans in Madagascar may prove a blessing, the very word "slave" should be struck out of the vocabulary, and that of trade in black people, whether indigenous or strangers, to be considered unworthy of the dictionary of our commercial language.'<sup>1</sup>

One of those ardent memorialists concluded his suggestions by addressing the statesmen of France in an impassioned appeal. 'If you want your name to become immortal, entrust the care to perpetuate it to living beings, who regenerate themselves. Monuments in bronze get destroyed, marble is dumb, man speaks. Your name will be cherished and carried from mouth to mouth, repeated for ever by millions of men, whom you will have helped to be instructed, civilized and happy.'

This appeal found an echo in Governor Farquhar's heart. 'By the grace of *God*, that is my purpose,' he must have said, to judge by what followed.

His French collaborator realized his loving interest in the Malagasy. In his preface to the *Great Dictionary of Madagascar*, M. de Froberville expressed in words of homage what he knew Governor Farquhar intended doing. 'You are drawing out of the shadows of ignorance and barbarism one of the most

<sup>1</sup> M. de Cossigny, *Memoire présenté en 1773*.

savage populations of the world. By your generous care you are fertilizing in its womb the seeds and germs of civilization, mother of agriculture, commerce, and the arts.<sup>1</sup>

M. de Froberville was a champion of the Malagasy, whom he believes to have been calumniated with regard to their supposed horrible customs. He hopes that by his efforts this interesting but maligned people will become known for what it really is, and that in future the very word 'barbarian' will no more be applied to 'this gentle and hospitable people; friends of strangers, eager for enjoyment, loving the arts and cultivating them in a surprising degree; intelligent and susceptible to emulation; a gay, lively, and amiable race, to which the designation of the French of the South may aptly be applied'.

The policy which Governor Farquhar intended pursuing lay traced out before him. The time had come to carry it out.

The first thing to do was to bring about 'a union of power, or a combination of force; for an absolute authority, invested in the person of one chieftain alone, could deter others from attacking him, and enable him to prevent wars, at the instigation of the slave traders'.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, 'the necessity for persons, well adapted, to shew by their labours the advantages that would result from the exertions of the population under such a ruler'.

Governor Farquhar knew by now beyond doubt, that the Hova were the most numerous and most industrious of the tribes of Madagascar, and their ruler, Radama, the most powerful, warlike, and enlightened of the various chieftains, his army consisting of forty thousand men armed with fire-arms. It was therefore necessary to assist him to become the recognized sovereign of all Madagascar. This could be done by making an alliance with him, and by encouraging him to do the same with the other chiefs; but should it become necessary for him to acquire that supreme authority by conquest, then to help him to the possession of a fully trained army. Once this paramount ruler had become an ally, the next move would be to convince him of the benefits the prohibition of the exportation of his subjects as slaves would be to him and to his country.

<sup>1</sup> Farquhar Collection, Brit. Mus. op. cit. M. de Froberville, *Essai theorique sur la langue Madecasse*, 1816.

<sup>2</sup> MS. L.M.S., James Hastie. *Report in form of a letter to the Rev. D. Griffith*, 1821.

For Governor Farquhar that was the end to be achieved, therefore the first move in this great game of checkmating the slave trade was to come into direct contact with Radama. He chose M. Chardenoux, as enjoying the Hova ruler's friendship, to proceed to Tananarive to try to conclude an alliance with him.

Reporting to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on this venture, Mr. Farquhar mentions that the suppression of the slave trade in Mauritius had 'vexed' the traders, who did their best to discredit the British Government in the eyes of the natives. He therefore thought it 'indispensably necessary for preserving the harmony, which should subsist between the British merchants and other subjects settled in Madagascar, and the native Princes, to send a person properly qualified to the latter, in the hopes of forming a lasting peace, and procuring protection to H.B. Majesty's subjects in that island'.<sup>1</sup>

He hoped to counteract the influence of the French traders, for, so he wrote, 'My desire is by every amicable means to cut off one great source of slave supply.' He mentioned that hitherto attempts by Englishmen had failed, 'apparently from want of that delicacy and personal address so requisite in matters of this nature' which he believed M. Chardenoux to possess. Great tact would be required 'as such a mission would at first appear contravening the interests of the native Princes'.

The instructions given to M. Chardenoux are illuminating as to the purpose, scope, and method of the task entrusted to him. He was to make a careful inquiry on practically every aspect of the life, work, and ideas of the Hova, and to bring back specimens of everything in use, from jewels and weapons to silk-worms, and a certain female dwarf with whom the Governor desired to talk, and, if possible, to persuade some of the most enlightened men to accompany him to Mauritius.

M. Chardenoux was explicitly told that 'His Excellency does not pretend to dictate to the authorities in Madagascar, but he reckons on your zeal to discover the means for replacing for the Malagasy that vicious traffic. He hopes that, as you are personally convinced of the havoc this trade causes in Madagascar, you will be guided by the desire for the welfare of that country and not permit any contrary prejudices to

<sup>1</sup> 12th September 1816.

influence your conduct. . . . The King, who is the most enlightened man in Madagascar, cannot fail to admit the justice of the objections to the slave trade, which will have to be put before him by you, with tact on your part. It should be your policy to let him perceive by your arguments his personal interest, and that of his country, in prohibiting the sale of his subjects.'

M. Chardenoux was also reminded that it would depend upon the trouble he took to enlighten the King, and to convince him 'of the benevolent views of the English Government, and of the wish of the latter to procure for him the knowledge and enjoyment of the arts of Europe'.<sup>1</sup>

It required all the diplomatic skill, backed by the personal prestige of the envoy, to make Radama willing to make the desired alliance, for rumours had reached him of the proposed prohibition of the exportation of slaves, to be enforced by the British Government. However true in essence, it was not yet the moment to speak about it with the King, but to emphasize the fact that as far as he was concerned, the purpose of this visit was merely to make with him a treaty of amity.

M. Chardenoux admitted the truth of the King's information that the English did not buy slaves, since they preferred free labour. He, Radama, was of course free to do as he liked, being as much master in his country as the King of England in his; His Excellency had not for a moment been thinking to dictate to him, his one wish being to co-operate with him in his happiness, by procuring for him means for increasing the cultivation of his lands, and by the introduction of arts. M. Chardenoux suggested that the best way for convincing himself of the truth of his statements, would be for the King to send some children of the royal family to be educated in Mauritius.

This Radama agreed to do, and the successful envoy returned accompanied by several important men and by two brothers of the King, lads nine and fourteen years of age. These children, whom Governor Farquhar took into his own house, soon won his affection, 'while from a political point of view their arrival was an event of considerable importance to the Colony'.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Farquhar Collection, op. cit. fol. 167. April 1816.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to the Earl of Bathurst.

The success of this mission was all the greater as the general opinion had been that M. Chardenoux would never return alive.

As it was important to forge the iron while it was hot, Radama was at once notified by Governor Farquhar that he was sending Captain Lesage to sign the treaty of amity.

Accompanied by a doctor, an interpreter, a naturalist, by several British commissioned and non-commissioned officers, as well as by thirty sepoy and several Indian artificers, the captain proceeded to Tananarive.

During the arduous journey from Tamatave many messengers, sent with presents of provisions from the King, met the British envoy. Others merely came to inquire concerning the health of the party, which unfortunately was not good, many of the sepoy dying *en route*; the Europeans also suffering from fever.

Therefore it was with grateful hearts that the capital was at last approached, where Captain Lesage made his entry, saluted by the firing of cannon. He was carried by twelve men in a chair, which had been sent to meet him, surrounded by a vast number of soldiers armed with muskets, spears, and shields of bullock hide, who danced around him. Every time a halt was made, the British returned the salute by firing volleys.

Radama received the envoy sitting on a throne, surrounded by his ministers and bodyguard.

It was an impressive ceremony: Captain Lesage, having presented his credentials, was warmly welcomed by the King, and from that moment on everything was done to make the visitors comfortable, and their stay pleasant. Fever, however, claimed its victims. The captain himself was so seriously ill that his life was almost despaired of. Nevertheless he insisted on taking the oath of blood with Radama, as a means of creating an indissoluble bond between the Hovas and the British. Fortunately, the captain recovered. The treaty of amity signed, he at once left for Mauritius, while Sergeant Brady and the few sepoy were left behind to serve as instructors to Radama's army, their salary, however, to be paid by the British Government.

### *Chapter III*

#### A GREAT ISSUE

MEANWHILE, the Governor met the man who was to become his whole-hearted and successful co-operator in carrying out his plans for the peoples of Madagascar.

Sergeant James Hastie came to the notice not merely of the Governor, but of the whole population of Port Louis, in a dramatic manner—at a moment of the most anguished suspense of a people whose city was in the throes of a catastrophic conflagration. The hungry flames, roaring like a furnace, had consumed half the town, and between that and the other part stood Government House. Once this should be caught in the vortex of the fire, no power on earth could save the rest of the city from being destroyed. Horror and panic were reigning and the insufficiency of water was making the fight hopeless. Suddenly flames were seen on the roof of Government House.

At this crucial moment a saviour appeared. A damp towel wrapped round the lower part of his face, holding a pail of water by his teeth, a man was seen climbing up the roof, where he succeeded in quenching the flames. Three times he repeated this risky feat, and the city was saved.

This was the Irishman whom Fate led to Governor Farquhar's notice. He appointed him tutor to the two Hova princes who were living as members of his family. No better man could have been chosen, for to gigantic physical strength were joined a loving, gentle nature and a loyal heart. Of Protestant parentage, born in Cork, having received a liberal education, high-spirited, adventure- and pleasure-loving, James Hastie had chafed under the narrow views of his parents. He ran away from home, enlisted as a soldier, to the great regret of his family, who believed that the road which might have led him to the top of a career was now closed to him for good. Having served in India, James Hastie came with his regiment to Mauritius, where in September 1816, at the moment of that awful suspense, his devotion, cool-headedness, courage, and

presence of mind suddenly opened up before him possibilities of service never even dreamt of.

Writing to a friend in later years of his duties as tutor to the princes, James Hastie said: 'The orders of His Excellency on these subjects were of such an extended and impressive nature, that they afforded me ample instructions and my unadorned and simple mode of observing His Excellency's directions, being within the comprehension of my intellectual condition, tended much to create in the princes a desire for knowledge and arouse a spirit of emulation.'<sup>1</sup>

The Governor's aim was to prepare these lads to be his advocates with their brother. Hastie wrote with regard to this:

'The instructions given with regard to their education were framed on the most enlightened principles, always tending to effect His Excellency's object, by gradual progressive measures, to convince, through the organ of their own blood, the propriety and inception of abandoning the depopulation by war and slave trade, and instead, to adopt a policy of labour, and to create demands for constructive commerce.'

When the moment had arrived for the princes to return to Madagascar, their tutor accompanied them.

H.M. Frigate *Phaeton* brought the party to Tamatave, where Mr. Pyc, the newly appointed British Commercial Agent-in-Chief for Madagascar, was to reside. The Chief of Tamatave, Jean René, a mulatto, was at feud with Radama, and just at this time matters between these two had reached a crucial stage, for Radama was advancing with an army of 28,000 men—a terrible army carrying desolation. Jean René had always been friendly with the French, but recently he had transferred his sympathy to the English. Governor Farquhar hoped much from the influence of this so much more civilized ruler, whom he wanted to remain in power and at peace with Radama.

Captain Stanfell, commander of the *Phaeton*, and Mr. Pyc succeeded in persuading Jean René to meet Radama, and to make his peace with him by a treaty of amity.

Radama, who had meant to combine the settlement of the feud with the welcome to his brothers on their arrival in

<sup>1</sup> L.M.S. MSS., *J. Hastie to the Rev. D. Griffith*, fols. 18, 1821.



Tamatave, now spent some days there. Issues of far-reaching importance were discussed at the hospitable board of Jean René. In the presence of the Englishmen the two chiefs took the oath of blood, whereby they became brothers. Politically, this was a victory for Radama, who was now definitely acknowledged (by the other) as his paramount chief.

Mr. Pye had a long talk with the Hova ruler, whom he informed 'that H.E. Governor Farquhar wished him to style himself in future King of Madagascar'. Radama, who was ambitious and eager to follow in the steps of his father, was nothing loath to obey such a behest. He was grateful for all the kindness shown to his brothers, and was also gratified by the gifts of costly presents, among them a crown and some horses. He was also greatly pleased with the successful mediation between himself and Jean René.

The imminent arrival of French traders and the prospects of a probable reoccupation of their former settlements were taken into careful consideration by Governor Farquhar. These potential enemies had to be made innocuous as quickly as possible. He therefore wrote in his instructions to Captain Stanfell:

'It is a delusive hope that the slave traffic will stop and be finally abolished in this hemisphere, while the French settlements are in the very centre of it, and the right of search is denied, unless we do away with the market and cut off the trade at the source, which we now have the glorious opportunity of doing, without interfering with the right of, or giving the smallest cause of umbrage to, that nation. The present momentous crisis in the affairs of Madagascar, where the British name carries weight and influence no foreign nation ever before possessed there, induces me to make an effort of the most energetic nature to procure from Radama, as sovereign of the territory of Madagascar, and, as a matter of course, from the small chieftains on the coast, a treaty by which he will for ever abolish the transportation of slaves from the island of Madagascar.'

In England the question of the abolition of slavery was one which concerned 'the honour of the nation', so Lord Bathurst had written to Governor Farquhar, who surely did not require any reminders from London on this point.

It was now for Captain Stanfell to discuss a preliminary treaty with Radama, who—so it was believed—‘holds the destiny of the vast, populous and fertile, but ill-treated island, entirely in his hand, and the peculiar English relations with it are politically favourable for such a step’.

The preamble to the instructions runs thus: ‘This important scheme cannot be accomplished with precipitation. It must have the effect of persuasion and address. The object is to convince a semi-civilized despot.’ Radama must be told to make roads; must be taught the transport of produce on beasts of burden, until the people learn the use of draught carriages, and thus quadruple their resources. He should be taught to turn forests and mines to account, and to cultivate farinaceous roots, such as are in use in Mauritius.

‘The Agent should teach the King to erect houses in European manner; to make a garden, to form good workshops, and bands of foresters and wood-cutters, blacksmiths and carpenters, and make plantations of every kind, and thus show him to employ to advantage the great number of men he has at his disposal. The Indians lent him can teach him the breaking in of cattle. It is difficult to persuade a whole people, but a despotic king must be the chief merchant, chief cultivator, gardener, and artisan, as the best means of teaching his ignorant subjects.’<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Pye being unable to proceed to Tananarive, Hastie was to do so in accordance with the Governor’s orders. The diary which the Irishman kept during the two months his visit lasted Governor Farquhar afterwards sent to Lord Bathurst as giving ‘an interesting and unaffected picture of the interior of the country and manners of a people, hitherto little known’.<sup>2</sup>

In fact, Hastie recorded everything he observed, every conversation with the King, and incidentally also what fell to his lot to do. A man of many parts, he seems to have put his hand to the most varied jobs. He taught the princes; discussed the pros and cons of the slave trade with Radama; assisted at public affairs; tended the horses when they were overfed with rice; cheered the down-hearted sepoy; criticized their unsuccessful attempts at growing radishes and other European vegetables,

<sup>1</sup> P.R.O., 25th September 1816.

<sup>2</sup> *James Hastie’s Diary*. P.R.O., C.O. 167. 34.

the culture of which they were to teach the natives. He put up a bedstead for the King; treated his headaches; nursed and cured Malagasy suffering from fever and bandaged their sores; prepared a field for the cultivation of wheat, which he sowed; trained bullocks to the yoke; put up a clock which, when it struck the hour, 'made the king dance for joy.' He taught him the use of the compass, English weights, measures, and coins; explained a geographical map, pointing out on it the greatest kingdoms. He held forth on military matters, as well as taught the King to play draughts and whist, who, when he did not win, 'would fling the cards into a corner in a temper'. He gave him riding lessons, and the King, when he had ridden for the first time round the courtyard, 'laughed and screeched for joy, declaring that never in his life had he received so much pleasure'.

Hastie assisted at every public event, including the time when, attended by sepoys, Radama was washed; who 'when the water first touched him, screeched, which was re-echoed by the crowd outside. He screeched again, when dried, and this screech was re-echoed. When dressed the King walked out sprinkling some of the water on to the crowd.'

Radama evidently loved noise, for Hastie watched him 'hearing thirty women yell, and looking at some awkward males capering while two drums were being beaten by hand'. He noted in his diary: 'I cannot without regret see a king of Radama's abilities and power descend to such low amusements, but even in these he is superior to his people.' He was impressed by the alertness of the King's mind, his quickness of perception, and the thorough grasp he got of anything explained to him. However, he regretted finding him as superstitious as every one else, and he never did anything unless the augury was favourable.

One day Hastie witnessed the terrible procedure of the ordeal by tanguena poison. One of the princesses had fallen ill. Several of her attendants were accused of having caused the illness. 'They had, therefore, to prove their innocence by this ordeal, which consisted in having to swallow the poison, also bits of the skin of a black fowl, and drink many bowls of luke-warm rice water. They were considered guilty if, when vomiting, the head did not fall to the south. One only escaped with

her life, the others, after having had ears, noses, legs, and arms cut off, were cast down a steep rock.'

To Hastie's horror, his two pupils watched these proceedings with amusement, while other children flung stones on to the mangled corpses. He felt very distressed to see the princes slip back into the lazy and filthy ways of the country. One day, when, instead of coming to their lessons, he had to go and fetch them, he found them lying near a roaring fire, covered with filthy rags, 'such as are used to clean pots'. To his gentle remonstrance 'they merely replied that they chose them because warm and because it was the custom'.

A very interesting and impressive incident was a military review of the troops led by Captain Brady. It was a regular field day, which the royal ladies attended, sitting on the backs of tall men. The sight of this well-drilled army was proof to Hastie that 'all that was wanted to make the Hova a great people was instruction'. He soon discovered that Brady's example was not confined to training the soldiers, but was a power for the general good.

To Hastie it was surprising how contradictory Radama's position was in relation to his subjects: 'while a whisper of the king was echoed like thunder by the audience gathered at the Kabary, and his order for silence was implicitly obeyed', yet, on the other hand, Hastie found him completely led by his people. 'True, he can break through much, but there is a point where the leaders of the people suggest and he gives in.' This being so made his task of winning Radama over to Governor Farquhar's wishes all the harder.

He found the same contradiction of attitude when alone with the King, when, during these private talks, he would bring in the devastating effects of slavery. The theme of his daily conversation with Radama was 'that Governor Farquhar regretted seeing the natives of so fine and fruitful a country as Madagascar, become slaves in another country; when their labour would ensure them an increase of riches in their own, and ultimately make him one of the greatest kings of the world'.

Radama's arguments rang the changes on the theme: in Madagascar traffic in slaves is fair; that his people had never worked and did not like to work; that for his part he had nothing but slaves to give in return for arms; that he would not know what

to do with the prisoners of war if he did not sell them to be exported; that if he agreed to His Excellency's wishes, he would be exposed to attacks by other chiefs, who seeing him bereft of the means to buy arms, would conquer his country; that his people would never agree to his abolishing the slave trade'. Writing some years later concerning these days, Hastie mentioned: 'I could not disapprove of the arguments . . . as I considered power to be the best means for peace.'<sup>1</sup>

But the Irishman had not kissed the Blarney stone in vain. It was therefore easy for him to word Governor Farquhar's wishes in such a way as to appeal to Radama's vanity and ambition. He assured the King that 'His Excellency considered him the most enlightened person in Madagascar, and undoubtedly the most powerful; that the acts of a king should make his name live for ever and that he would certainly increase his power and renown and immortalize his name.'

Hastie fully realized that Radama could not be asked to surrender the only source of revenue, and the only means for buying arms, for the sake of an idea dear to the British public. Therefore when the King again and again held forth on the danger to his safety, he suggested that he should write to His Excellency and ask for an equivalent in the supply of arms and munitions; and that he, for his part, would do the same.

Radama's position was undoubtedly difficult because of his numerous official advisers, chief among whom was an old sorcerer who had been his first instructor and without whose approval he would do nothing.

Just then Radama received a letter from his Minister at Mauritius, who reported to him the gist of a conversation with the Governor, in which the latter had expressed pleasure that the King was forming a regular army, and the hope that he would no longer be subservient to his prejudiced advisers. At the same time, Governor Farquhar wrote to Radama that when back in England, where he expected to be in a few months, he would tell his own King all the glorious things of Radama's wisdom and power and attachment, but that pleasure would be infinitely increased, could he at the same time tell him 'that Radama, the great conqueror of Madagascar, has followed the example of the wise King of the

<sup>1</sup> op. cit. Letter to D. Griffith.

Whites, and has resolved to abolish for ever, throughout that vast, beautiful island, the sale of black men for transportation'.

Hastie felt that the time had come for him to return to Mauritius, but Radama was always discovering new pretexts for keeping him back. He offered him money to remain as the tutor of his brothers; but all to no avail. Hastie had, however, to promise to return, which he did, on condition that Governor Farquhar would permit it.

The Irishman's heart went out in pity to the Malagasy, because, so he wrote, 'they have no idea of anything intended to imitate religion'. He perceived that they were governed by fear of their rulers and not by love. He felt that 'nature being most bounteous in this country, the people only want an example shown them by their rulers in order to become good and happy; but, that until the sorcerers were banished from the court, no such example would be given. What was wanted was the introduction of religion.'

Hastie was anxious before leaving Tananarive to visit certain mines, which the King permitted him to do; during this expedition he made many observations on country and people. The absence of roads provided him with a solution to Radama's perplexity as to what to do with his prisoners of war, namely, to use them for road-making, as was done in India by the British. But the King refused even to consider such a suggestion, for the reason, 'that roads would enable other chiefs to invade his country, and also that he did not want his enemies [the captives] to be in his proximity'. Hastie tried to reassure him on this point; assuring Radama that 'his power was such as to prevent any possibility of an insurrection'.

One day Radama sent a message to Governor Farquhar 'that he considered him his father and the King of England his grandfather'. He expressed the wish for Englishmen to reside in his country; at the same time he promised them his protection and fatherly care, and they, so he hoped, would teach his people by their example.

Radama continued to be torn between conflicting interests; sleep fled from him. Thus one night he came in pouring rain to Hastie at 2 a.m. Standing outside his house, he asked him whether the British Government would be likely to make the same offers to any other king in Madagascar.

For, if other chiefs were also to get arms, there would be no protection for him. Hastie reassured him on this point. 'No. You alone are our ally. You have shown wisdom and humanity.'

Radama drew up a list of arms and munitions he required as an equivalent for what he would otherwise obtain in exchange for slaves. This list Hastie promised to pass on to Governor Farquhar. Having given this assurance, he thought he might now safely depart; but victory was not yet. The people, gathered in their thousands at a great Kabary, were all against the King promising to prohibit the exportation of slaves. They taunted him with being a slave to the English, and declared that they would far rather fight with sticks and stones than that he should be subservient to them. This made Radama furious. He returned to his house, and summoned Hastie. The Irishman found the King fuming with anger and trembling with rage, surrounded by twenty of the old men. Hastie assured him that all persons living in Madagascar were subjects of the King. Once the arms which the British Government would supply were in his possession, obedience could be enforced. This evidently did not soothe the offended monarch's wounded pride, for 'he vociferated loudly that he was English, would be English, and would make his people obey him. His passion increased as he spoke.'

Here was a deadlock: the King furious, his people furious, his ministers divided. At this moment the Prime Minister, a sensible, intrepid, and generally respected young man, brought a message to Hastie from the old sorcerer, who asked him to come and explain everything to him, which he did, but it was apparently of no avail.

However, after the storm—the calm. The next morning the King came to see Hastie in order to express his pleasure that he had spoken with his 'Papa', and that now everything had been satisfactorily settled. He only regretted not being able to accede to Governor Farquhar's demands without receiving an equivalent, 'but that he had to do so in fairness to himself and his people'.

Although Radama had now agreed to prohibit the exportation of his subjects as slaves, Hastie's task was not yet accomplished. Always new problems and difficulties were brought

before him by the King, who felt certain that his people would not work for him.

Hastie replied that it was merely a question of trying, because the people had never been workers, but they would soon acquire the habit. The country was full of resources which, by labour, would increase his power; and, if he really thirsted after glory, the King had to imitate the rulers who had preceded him, and follow the way they had traced; previous to his reign the people had not enjoyed the advantages he had granted them; they owed everything to him and would, therefore, joyfully join with him to promote the good of his country.

But Radama doubted that, and his perplexity increased when his ministers came to him and asked 'whether he intended them, who had lived in ease, to begin to work. They had lived on the sale of slaves which had made him powerful.'

The harassed King knew not what to say. He sheltered himself behind Hastie's assurance that 'His Excellency would not advise anything to their hurt; that what he advised must certainly succeed'.

Still another problem likely to arise was put forth. 'What if Frenchmen come to buy slaves in return for merchandise?' Hastie's reply was conclusive: 'that, once Radama had agreed to prohibit the exportation of slaves, *who could be bought in Madagascar for domestic use only*, he would have to inflict severe punishment on any one of his subjects, discovered selling them for exportation'.

The King sighed, and said he would do his best, but he could not guarantee that his orders would be obeyed as strictly as he desired.

At last Hastie was able to leave. On arrival at Tamatave he was handed a letter from Governor Farquhar, conveying the important news that he had himself also come to the conclusion that an equivalent should be promised to Radama for his loss of revenue. He therefore sent a list of what he would agree to give, but Hastie was to be as economical as possible when filling in the figures.

Twelve hours later the faithful agent left Tamatave to return to Tananarive, a journey of three weeks; but he had no other thought than quickly to reassure Radama, and to get



the treaty signed. It took some persuasion to make the King understand what the duty of his envoys would be, but at last everything was settled, and five of his chief men went to Tamatave.

By the treaty, Radama not only agreed to prohibit the exportation of his subjects as slaves, but he also undertook to prevent in future the yearly raiding expeditions against the King of Johanna,<sup>1</sup> an ally of England. In return he was to receive yearly:

1,000 dollars in gold.

1,000 dollars in silver.

100 barrels of powder of 100 lb. each.

100 English muskets complete with accoutrements.

1,000 flints.<sup>2</sup>

400 red jackets.

400 shirts.

400 pairs of trousers.

400 pairs of boots.

400 soldiers' caps.

12 sergeants' swords, regulation, with belt.

400 pieces of white cloth.

200 pieces of blue cloth (Indian).

A full-dress coat, hat, boots, all complete for the King.

2 horses.

'All this to be handed over on a certificate that the regulations had been carried out during the preceding quarter, upon a certificate signed by Radama and counter-signed by the British Resident at Tananarive.'

Captain Stanfell and Mr. Pye signed the treaty on behalf of the British Government.

This solemn act was carried out with due ceremony, salutes being fired at the moment of the actual signing. Thus, under the firing of English guns, a measure was inaugurated, thanks to which the inhabitants of Madagascar could never again be taken out of their country as slaves.

Captain Stanfell wrote to the Governor: 'I have much felicity in congratulating your Excellency on this most important point gained.' Concerning the man who had been the

<sup>1</sup> Comoros.

<sup>2</sup> The author saw a large basket full of these selfsame flints in the museum at Tananarive, also some of the muskets.

instrument of this achievement he wrote: 'Infinite merit attaches to Mr. Hastie. . . .'<sup>1</sup>

'In view of the steadiness of character while at the Court of Radama, his zeal for the benefit of H.M.'s Government, not unequalled by his desire to carry into effect His Excellency's instruction', the Captain proposed that he should be appointed Assistant Agent, resident at the court of Radama.

It had been stipulated that the treaty was to be straightway carried out, even before it had been ratified by the Crown. James Hastie was appointed to Tananarive to watch over its due execution.

Governor Farquhar wrote to the Secretary of State for the Colonial Department<sup>2</sup> to inform him 'of the total abolition of the slave market'.

He wrote:

'It was impossible to obtain such a treaty without giving Radama the equivalent in power which the treaty meant to deprive him of. He could not long have maintained his preponderance in Madagascar had he been deprived of the great source of his supply of arms and ammunition, which arose exclusively from this trade. . . . I trust that your Lordships will consider this expense<sup>3</sup> as comparatively trifling, when weighed with the magnitude of the object of the treaty.' He hoped that the Earl would be pleased 'to approve of these peaceful and unambitious measures which will have such far-reaching consequences for the welfare of the natives; by abolishing a great cause of crime in these seas, industry will be promoted, safety provided for the intercourse and facility of trade with Madagascar, on which Mauritius depends for its subsistence. . . .'

To Radama, Governor Farquhar wrote to impress him once more with all the advantages which would accrue not only to his country, but to himself and his dynasty—permanence and stability, 'thanks to the greatest sovereignty of Madagascar, now so well placed in the hands of his Majesty.'

For His Excellency high politics and practical matters of everyday life went together; thus in this same letter the King was invited to send an ambassador to England; was informed

<sup>1</sup> Tamatave, 23rd October 1817. Captain Stanfell to Governor Farquhar.

<sup>2</sup> C.O. 167, 18th November 1817.

<sup>3</sup> £2,000.

of the return of the two Malagasy women from Mauritius who had finished their course in sewing and household work, and of the dispatch of a young mare in order to introduce the race of Mauritius horses into Madagascar.

Although no ambassador was sent to England, some of the signatories of the treaty came to Mauritius, where Mr. Farquhar had the satisfaction of discussing it with them in every detail before himself sailing for England. Reasons of health made it imperative to do so just then, although his official furlough was not yet due.

Unable to await a reply from the home Government as to who was to replace him temporarily, he appointed General Hall as Acting Governor, on the understanding that no changes of any kind were to be introduced. In November, Governor Farquhar sailed for England, deeply regretted by the inhabitants of Mauritius, who, in an address presented to him, testified to his gentleness and goodness, comparing themselves 'to a family which is to be separated from a good father'.

They sent an address<sup>1</sup> also to the Prince Regent to thank him 'for the gift of such an administrator . . . whose unlimited devotion in the hour of catastrophe, had served to develop even more than his sentiments of humanity and generosity, which are the chief characteristics of his heart'.

It must have been with a very grateful heart that Governor Farquhar started out on his journey, conscious of the love of the former French subjects, to whom he had tried to make a foreign domination acceptable, and happy in the knowledge that his loving plans for the welfare of the people of Madagascar were to be put at once into execution. He knew that James Hastic, as accredited 'British commercial agent to the Court of Radama', would fill this post loyally and successfully.

In Paris Mr. Farquhar was received in audience by the King, who wished to bestow on him the order of the Legion d'Honneur in recognition of his goodness and sympathy shown to his former subjects.

The British Government, however, did not agree to this, but in recognition of his distinguished services, the King made him a baronet.

<sup>1</sup> P.R.O.C.O. 167. 32.

## *Chapter IV*

### A BREACH OF FAITH

THE first thing the British Agent did on his return to Tananarive was to fight an epidemic of small-pox, which had claimed thousands of victims, among them a hundred members of the royal family. Thanks to vaccination this plague was stayed. Next he got the King to build bridges and to make roads, which Radama was now willing to do, because he looked forward to the day when, thanks to horses being bred at Tananarive, he would have horse transport.

Radama's proclamation concerning the prohibition of selling slaves for exportation had immediate results, owing to the severe penalties to be inflicted on any one breaking this law.

Seven months had passed since that fateful step had been taken, when rumours spread from the coast that the promised equivalent, due in five months, would not be paid over. Unfavourable remarks were made about the English by some of the King's relations, whom the King summarily put to death for spreading lies.

Radama's faith in an Englishman's word received a terrible shock when, soon after, he learnt from reliable sources that General Hall had publicly declared that he would not hand over the equivalent before he had had direct orders from London.

All Hastie's hopes that this was but a misunderstanding, soon to be removed, were dashed to the ground when the King heard from his ambassador in Mauritius that the Acting Governor was determined not to comply with the treaty.

Excitement was rife. Hastie's passionate appeals were coldly listened to by Radama, who placed an ultimatum that unless the equivalent was delivered within a hundred days<sup>1</sup> he would again sell slaves. He had kept his word; let England keep hers.

Utterly perplexed, deeply unhappy, Hastie left Tananarive

<sup>1</sup> A margin of 70 days.

to put before General Hall the fatal consequences of his action, but to no effect. The General gave as his reason for withholding the equivalent that slaves had been brought across from Madagascar—a breach of the treaty. In vain did Hastie argue that these particular slaves had been sold before the treaty was signed, and that ‘if this equivalent was not paid, British faith would effectually be destroyed in Madagascar. ‘British faith!’ exclaimed General Hall. ‘Much we care for British faith among a parcel of savages. . . . This treaty is all trash and nonsense.’<sup>1</sup>

A few days later the General informed Hastie that his services were no longer required, as he was recalling every British subject from Madagascar; that all contact with that island was to cease ‘because Radama had not kept his side of the bargain.’<sup>2</sup> Heart-broken to see Governor Farquhar’s labours undone, the loyal Irishman wrote a detailed account of all these happenings to his former chief.

At this most unpropitious moment two missionaries with their wives and children arrived in Mauritius with intent to proceed to Madagascar. At last the urgent requests of Governor Farquhar to the London Missionary Society had been fulfilled, but unfortunately he was not there to welcome the men from whose activity he expected such great things.

All that Monsieur de Froberville had unearthed out of the mass of memoranda preserved as to the necessity of introducing Christianity among the Malagasy, corresponded to the Governor’s personal convictions. His preference for the London Missionary Society was due to his great respect for its agent in Mauritius, the Rev. le Brun. This Swiss gentleman seemed to possess to the full the qualities the French memorialists had considered of such importance—namely, gentleness of character and freedom from ambition. Mr. Farquhar had written to the Society of all he himself had done to prepare the way for the missionaries by collecting information concerning Madagascar, its people, and language. He mentioned especially the memoranda by the French missionaries, the vocabularies formed by them, which he had revised and finally reduced

<sup>1</sup> Letter from J. Hastie to Governor Farquhar, 3rd June 1818. P.R.O., Mauritius.

<sup>2</sup> That clandestine smuggling of slaves was carried on, but without Radama’s knowledge, was a fact.

into a dictionary sufficiently copious for all the purposes of the language. . . . 'Such are the means', he wrote, 'which I offer the directors of your society, and I shall be most happy to be instrumental by them to give the blessings of Christianity to the numerous and ingenious population of the vast island of Madagascar, which is now become a portion of the British Empire.'<sup>1</sup> He explained that in spite of these linguistic preparations he had not yet been able 'to have the Holy Scriptures translated, owing to the lack of suitable persons, as he would not have unbelievers undertake the solemn work of translation'.

Meanwhile, the zealous Governor had done his best to foster the knowledge of Malagasy by appointing a lecturer to teach it at the High School of Port Louis.

That the Governor considered M. le Brun to possess the qualifications of an ideal missionary and co-operator in his plans for Madagascar is evident from a letter to Lord Bathurst, mentioning having seriously thought of sending that gentleman to the court of Radama;<sup>2</sup> 'by which means I shall have constant communication with the interior of Madagascar, and be able to make the best use of the friendship of that Prince for the mutual interest of our respective countries. M. le Brun has been remarkably successful in the education of the numerous class of free coloured people<sup>3</sup> in which the island abounds, and he has conducted himself with so much discretion, as not to give the smallest offence to any inhabitant, although his employment is of a nature to be viewed with jealousy by colonists in general.'

M. le Brun, in his turn, wrote to the Society mentioning the dictionary and a grammar with a large vocabulary—'twenty years' labour of a French gentleman, who wished to know what Society would be willing to undertake their publication.'<sup>4</sup>

The first to bring Madagascar and its people to the knowledge of the London Missionary Society had been a Dutch ex-Dragoon officer, Van der Kempen, who, compelled to leave his regiment because of his notoriously fast life, studied medicine

<sup>1</sup> L.M.S. MS., 20th May 1816.

<sup>2</sup> September 1816.

<sup>3</sup> Several men of mixed blood who became famous were pupils of Government schools (e.g. Prof. Brown-Sequard, etc.) which M. le Brun had succeeded in getting opened for them. Evenor Hitié's *Histoire de Maurice*, p. 171.

<sup>4</sup> These books in manuscripts are in the British Museum, Farquhar Collection, Add. MS., 18118-18135.

and became a doctor. After having passed through a religious crisis, he became a missionary to the Hottentots. Arrived in Cape Town in 1797, Madagascar soon became of great interest to him; so much so, that he purposed going there himself as a missionary. The war prevented this plan from being carried out.

Almost twenty years had passed when, in 1816, Madagascar fell as a heavy burden upon the heart of the principal of a Welsh theological college. The Rev. Thomas Phillips beheld in a dream a beautiful island with high mountains and plains, and a savage people calling out, 'Come over and help us.' On waking he felt certain that this was Madagascar. Deeply moved by this interpretation, he told his dream to his students, two of whom, Jones and Bevan, at once declared their readiness to answer the call. Two years later, under the auspices of the London Missionary Society, they arrived in Mauritius at the very moment when General Hall had broken off all communication with Madagascar.

He received the missionaries quite kindly, but explained that all he could suggest, after having discussed the matter with M. le Brun, was for one of them to go alone, at his own risk, as a private person, to ascertain the real state of things without going into the interior.<sup>1</sup>

In a letter to Lord Bathurst, General Hall expressed his regret at the arrival of the 'pious gentlemen' to whom he had communicated his candid opinion, while to the directors of the Society he wrote 'to remove the errors under which they were labouring with regard to the state of Madagascar and the disposition of its ruler'.<sup>2</sup>

Here was a dilemma for the missionaries, who, apart from their own equivocal position, found the whole colony in a ferment, the General having upset everybody by a series of arbitrary acts. Contrary to his promise to Governor Farquhar, he had been interfering with the working of the administration, dismissing officials and even judges. No worse substitute could Governor Farquhar have chosen; however, he could not do otherwise than to put the General in command as Acting Governor.

News of what was happening in Mauritius reached the sick

<sup>1</sup> L.M.S. MS., Letter from David Jones, 9th July 1919.

<sup>2</sup> General Hall to the L.M.S. MS., 12th July 1818.

man in England. Alas, the whole carefully built edifice was threatened.

The Chief Secretary, M. Barry, wrote to him:<sup>1</sup>

'You must move heaven and earth to get General Hall out instantly, not an hour is to be lost. The Colonists feel that their very existence is threatened. . . . They are in the power of one in whose bosom there is a deep-rooted prejudice and rancorous antipathy and aversion towards all that bear the name of Frenchmen and colonist. . . . They may very shortly be goaded into pitiful indiscretions; martial law will be proclaimed, the slaves will rise up in arms and good-night to all.'

How deeply upset and perturbed Sir Robert Farquhar was on learning of these things, doings, and dangers, becomes apparent in the shaky handwriting of his letter to the Minister of this 'frenzied violence', offering to return at once to Mauritius.<sup>2</sup>

'Why this connexion with Madagascar, so important to the interest of humanity and the British Nation, has been broken off I can't imagine. If this act does not obliterate the British name for good it will leave us a long time to regret what has been done, and to look in vain for a political juncture so favourable to the interest of that island and of Great Britain, as the one that I had the good fortune to take advantage of, after having superintended and directed with the utmost caution every step that led progressively to the accomplishment of this important object.'

For the newly arrived missionaries things were not made easier by tales of the ferocious and treacherous character of the Malagasy, and of the wickedness of the slave traders, who would certainly return and by every means hinder Christian work. Nothing daunted, the Rev. David Jones decided to run every risk and to proceed to Madagascar, where, to his surprise, he received at Tamatave a warm welcome from the leading trader, who not only offered him hospitality, but acted as his interpreter and intercessor before Jean René. This king permitted Mr. Jones to open a school, to which many chiefs brought their children. Mr. Jones taught them according to the Lancastrian system, whereby the more advanced pupils

<sup>1</sup> Chief Secretary G. A. Barry, 5th February 1818.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. 41, P.R.O. Mauritius. 18th November 1818.



at once imparted their knowledge to others, learning and teaching at the same time.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. and Mrs. Bevan soon joined their friends, but once again the climate proved deadly; and within a short time David Jones found himself alone. But Madagascar seemed to claim him all the more because wife and child had been laid into its soil.

What Hastie had foreseen as one of the consequences of the withdrawal of all British subjects now really happened, namely the substitution of French for English influence in Tananarive.

The same kind of loyal, capable, and honest agent the Governor of Mauritius had in Hastie, the Governor of Bourbon found in Sylvain Roux. Since by the decision of the Regent France was to get back her former establishments in Madagascar, this erstwhile French agent was now reappointed and sent to reoccupy the island of Ste Marie and to hoist the French flag in every place along the east coast where, since 1642, it had flown till the capitulation in 1810.

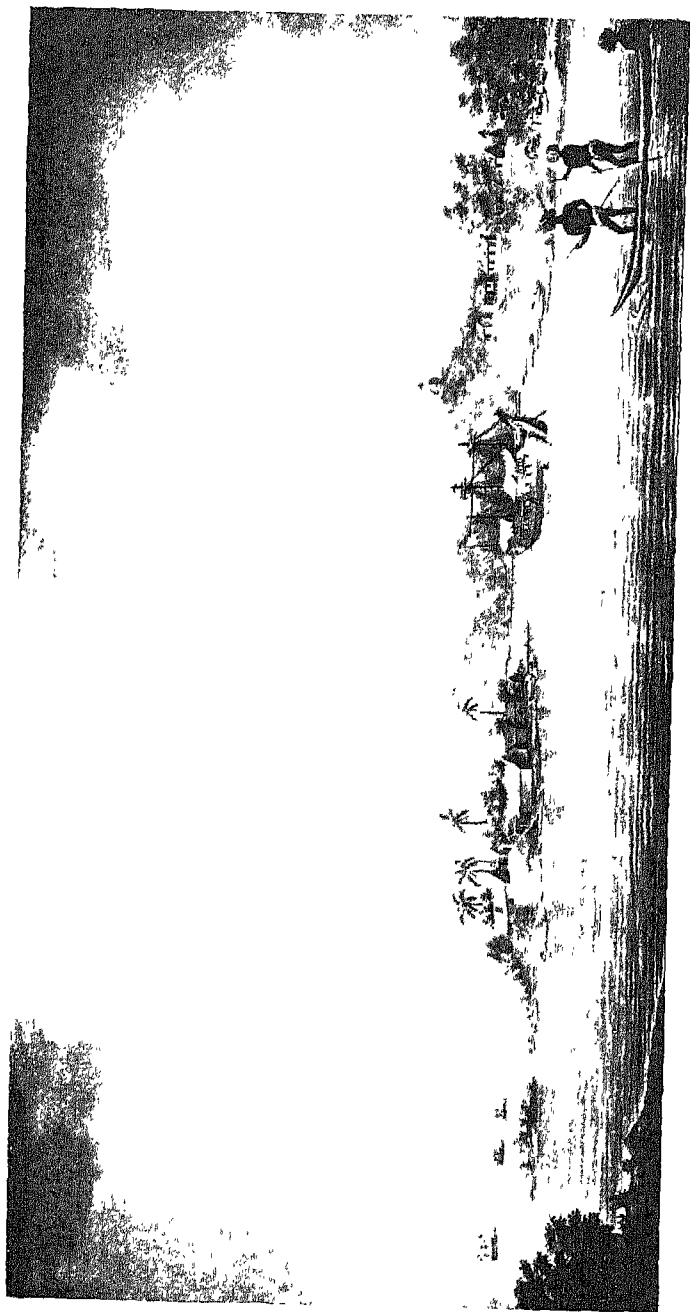
Sylvain Roux fully realized the political importance of his task. He was not going to leave anything to chance. He asked for several specialists to be sent with him to explore the country and to study its possibilities. France was re-entering a country where she had acquired rights, but which it would require wisdom and tact to reassert. He knew the Malagasy, their love for gifts, and their passion for music. These 'big children' should be supplied with amusements which would serve French interests. He therefore asked for a barrel organ and an electric condenser with its accessories; for the chiefs he wanted medals with the head of the King.

M. Roux wrote,<sup>2</sup> full of joy and confidence that all would be plain sailing, especially as with regard to the Ile de Ste Marie the natives fully recognized the right of France. Now was the moment to begin the carrying out of the great project of colonizing Madagascar, so many times conceived, and so often abandoned.

He suggested occupying the Bay of Tintingue and Tamatave.

<sup>1</sup> This system was to prove exceedingly successful, and alone explains the rapid increase in the number of pupils.

<sup>2</sup> Arch. Min. Col., Paris. M. Roux to the Minister, 10th May 1817, to M. de Portal.



SAINTE MARIE IN 1829



The administrators of Bourbon formally notified Radama that Sylvain Roux had been appointed by the King 'Colonial Agent for the east coast of Madagascar, to re-establish the former relations of commerce and of amity, so necessary for the people of both islands'.

The French officials, although knowing that Radama claimed to be King of Madagascar, never once gave him any other title than 'Chief of the Hova Nation'. Although merely addressed as 'Prince', and not 'Majesty', Radama sent a most amicable reply, professing to love the French nation as much as these gentlemen could love her. He invited these high officials to visit him in Tananarive, as he had never yet had 'the extreme satisfaction of seeing a French General, nor even an envoy of the French Government'.<sup>1</sup>

Radama had great confidence in Jean René, whom in the above letter he had described as 'King of Tamatave'. Sylvain Roux, who was a friend of Jean René, had succeeded in making the Governor realize the importance of keeping on friendly terms with this 'most intimate counsellor of Radama.'

Jean René himself was most ready to be friendly. In fact he wrote an autograph letter to Louis XVIII. It begins thus: 'Sire, one of your former subjects, born French of Madagascar origin, permits himself to express his love for your Majesty . . .' After mentioning his position in Madagascar as an ally of Radama, King of the most powerful nation, who has appointed him commander of the whole east coast, he expressed his pleasure at the appointment of Sylvain Roux as French representative.

The lessons of the past had been at last learnt, for the French captain of a frigate sent to visit the reoccupied posts was given order 'to treat the chiefs with great gentleness and even consideration, in order to inspire them with a sentiment of preference over our rivals,<sup>2</sup> the English'.

If for the French officials of Bourbon the British were dangerous rivals, the French were considered in just the same light by those in Mauritius. To loyal Hastie the French were a terrible moral danger, for, so he wrote, 'their influence, uncurbed by the presence of an English agent in Madagascar,

<sup>1</sup> Arch. Min. Col., Paris, 30th July 1818.

<sup>2</sup> 1st October 1818.

exulted in our sullied honour, began to emerge from the abyss into which the honourable exertions of His Excellency had pushed it'.<sup>1</sup>

Just at this crucial moment Sir Robert Farquhar returned to Mauritius to find himself confronted by the unprecedented difficulties in the colony, and the deadlock with regard to Radama.

The good name of England gone, confidence shaken, the distressed Scotsman felt that he could do no better than to send the same trusted agent to Tananarive to win back what had been lost. Mr. Jones was to accompany him to try to start work at the capital, but his journey and future activity were conditional on his complete abstention from all interference in politics. 'No mixing of religion and politics,' were the Governor's orders.<sup>2</sup>

On arrival at Tamatave Hastie learned that Radama had declared that no Englishman was ever again to visit his capital. He therefore sent a messenger to announce his intention of going to Tananarive, asking permission for Mr. Jones to accompany him. This having been granted, the journey was undertaken, and the missionary witnessed the welcome given to Hastie by the King, of whom he wrote: 'who at the dinner table seemed lost in ecstasy and joy to have his "dear Hastie" back. Overwhelmed with rejoicing and laughter Radama was hardly able to keep his seat, hugging and pulling about Mr. Hastie in such a manner that I have never witnessed such a sight of excess of joy in any occasion in all my life as this day on the reception of Mr. Hastie.'

In honour of his arrival cannon were fired; there was music and dancing.

The story of all that happened during the next eventful days in Tananarive Mr. Jones noted in his journal. It records faithfully the terrible difficulties Hastie had to overcome before Radama agreed to renew the treaty. The King had his people against that measure, and this for several reasons: the renewal of the slave trade had brought in money; the traders had become favourites, and so necessary to his people that he feared little short of a general insurrection were he to

<sup>1</sup> J. Hastie to the Rev. D. Griffith, 18th February 1821.

<sup>2</sup> Had this wise policy been made compulsory on all missionaries, whatever their creed, there would have been less political complication and rivalry.

trust the English again, 'as it had become a kind of proverb among his subjects—"false as the English"'.

Radama mentioned having heard what the French nation had done to a late king. He preferred to keep his head. Days were spent in argument; again and again Hastie, utterly exhausted and distressed, would come to report matters to his friend. Radama put a condition impossible for Hastie to agree to: as a test of British good faith the Government should pay for and educate twenty of his subjects, some in Mauritius, some in England. Certain of the chiefs, too, were to be taken to England in order to convince themselves of the truth of Hastie's words. For granting such a demand Governor Farquhar's envoy had no mandate. Despairing, anguished, to see all chances of success vanishing, Hastie asked Jones whether he thought the Society would help; but Jones shook his head. Suddenly a great resolve came to Hastie—he himself would bear the cost. What matter his own financial ruin, if only the great scheme for the welfare of the Malagasy was saved? Off he went to the King, to return radiant. Radama had promised to renew the treaty. The Kabary was called, the British flag unfurled, and the proclamation read, acclaimed with shouts of joy by the people. Hastie, reporting on the scene, wrote: 'Freedom from the bloody stain of slavery was hailed as a gift of the British nation.' The generous Irishman added: 'I declare, the first peal of Radama's cannon announcing the amity sealed, rejoiced my heart more than thousands would have done.'

The King's French secretary, M. Robin, so Hastie reported, 'played throughout a good and honourable role'.

When the treaty had been signed Radama asked Hastie the point-blank question: 'what had made him suddenly agree to that condition after having declared his inability to do so?' There was nothing left but to tell the truth, whereupon the King said smilingly: 'Just what I thought.'

Then, not to be outdone in generosity by the Irishman, he handed his friend a receipt for the equivalent due to him, with these words:

'What your Government proposes paying me will help to defray the expense of instructing the people you are taking with you. As to Jean René's, pay him the sum first agreed

upon. . . . You need not make any comments on what I now said. If your Government instructs my people, I am theirs for ever.'

To the London Missionary Society Radama wrote stating his views with regard to missionaries being sent to his country; welcoming them, and offering his protection, but he made it perfectly plain that he only accepted teachers of the Christian religion provided skilful artisans formed the largest number—'in order to make his people good workmen as well as good Christians'.

Mr. Jones, who wrote to the Society confirming Radama's invitation and conditions, gave at the same time the following description of the King, whom he calls 'the protector of missionaries and artificers'.<sup>1</sup>

'The King is a young man about 29 years old who has subjected almost all Madagascar to himself and united the chieftains and made them submissive to him so that an end is almost put to all wars between the petty chiefs in Madagascar. He is very powerful and can in a few days raise an army of 100,000 men. He has already 2,000 who can go through their exercise by English commands. . . . It is astonishing what government he has over his people—they tremble before him and yet he is always very merry and affable with them.'

It was a great moment for both Governor Farquhar and James Hastie when the latter handed his chief the text of Radama's proclamation dated 18th October 1820.

<sup>1</sup> L.M.S. Arch., 18th October 1820.

## *Chapter V*

### BRITISH ASCENDANCY

RADAMA permitted Mr. Jones to build a school, of which he himself laid the foundation stone, and till the building was ready for occupation, school was held in one of the royal houses.

Meanwhile two of the King's brothers-in-law were visiting England. Of the lads they had taken with them, some were placed in a training college to learn arts and crafts, the others being taught to make gunpowder. The princes, highly satisfied with the reception they had received, returned to Madagascar accompanied by one ordained missionary and four artisans. Others soon followed.

The natural tendency of the Malagasy to imitate what is new proved a great asset to the missionaries, while the veneration for the customs of the ancestors was felt to be a potential danger to the stability of the rapidly spreading civilization.

Radama was all for progress and innovation; the final decision as to means and methods to be his alone. There was, for instance, the question of making Malagasy a written language. Radama wrote in Arabic characters, but wished to introduce for general use the alphabet in Latin letters, as simpler. The divergence of opinion among his English advisers, as to the best way to write the sounds, made him cut the Gordian knot by deciding that the vowels were to be as in French, and the consonants as in English, himself suggesting the combinations of consonants for such difficult sounds as *ts*, *dz*, *ng*.<sup>1</sup>

A direct result of the lack of unanimity among the missionaries concerning the alphabet was the foundation by the King of a school under the directorship of M. Robin, which three hundred officers and their wives had at once to attend.

The introduction of secular education, and that by a Frenchman, was a bitter pill for the English missionaries.

One minor reform was deeply resented by the wives of the

<sup>1</sup> L.M.S., Letter by Rev. D. Griffith. 11th April 1823.



soldiers, whom the King had ordered to shave their beards and to cut their hair, himself setting the example. The wives came in a body to the capital to remonstrate with him for robbing himself and their husbands of their beauty.<sup>1</sup>

Hastie's influence was twofold—stimulating and restraining. Having set his heart on trying to remove some of the worst features of Malagasy social life, he got Radama to abolish the trial by poison, and to declare the killing of children born on unlucky days murder. Debts contracted for funeral expenses a custom which brought many a debtor into slavery, were made unrecoverable as unlawful. Galling restrictions on food and clothing were removed, for hitherto only the nobles could eat or wear what they liked. The proclamation of this new freedom was hailed by the people with as much delight as had been the abolition of the exportation into slavery. Hastie had convinced the King that by the abolition of these restrictions commerce would be furthered; that by a general rise of the standard of living, trade would increase and thereby his revenues. Hastie succeeded also in making the King realize the appalling state of filth of the capital as unhygienic. The result was that cleanliness became compulsory, heavy penalties being imposed; and soon Tananarive became the pattern for the other towns. He did his utmost to deter the King from making wars, suggesting that garrisons and settlements of Hova colonists at the ports might suffice to secure the allegiance of the various tribes, and thereby also prevent the introduction of weapons. Quite willing to follow his suggestions, Radama nevertheless considered that war was necessary for reducing refractory chiefs, and that it was good for his young troops to be in the field under his eye.

In the summer of 1821 Governor Farquhar left Mauritius for good. On his way to England he touched at Tamatave, where Radama was to welcome him. However, this meeting did not take place, as the King delayed his departure from the capital so as not to be absent from the great national feast, from fear lest his people might turn against him for caring more for the foreigners than for them.

Sir Robert, unable to wait any longer, sailed away. When Radama reached the port, the British vessel had left, and Hastie

<sup>1</sup> Kethura Jeffrays, *A Widowed Missionary's Journal*, London, 1827.

heard the King exclaim in deep sorrow, 'I shall never see my friend!'

From Tamatave Radama proceeded to Foulpointe, where he went on board a British man-of-war, but not until some of the officers had been put on shore as hostages. The commander held many a conversation with his royal guest, whose shrewdness, sagacity, and good sense greatly impressed him. In fact, he came to consider Radama a second Peter the Great.

After a dinner party on board the vessel, toasts to mutual success were drunk. The King accepted a copy of an English Bible, and then went forth with his army of 13,000 trained soldiers to conquer some more tribes.

It was during his visit to Foulpointe that an incident happened which proved how well Radama had learnt the lesson Governor Farquhar had taught him, when insisting that he should style himself King of Madagascar. For as such he could not agree to the claims put forward by Sylvain Roux on behalf of the French Government to the right to the east coast. The King refused to receive a deputation, declaring that he was sovereign of the whole island, and that France had no right whatever, not even to a foot of soil. In this attitude of sole sovereign of Madagascar, Radama was confirmed by Commodore Nourse, whose vessel he visited while at Majunga. British ships, belonging to the naval base of the Cape of Good Hope, frequently visited the Madagascar waters, to prevent clandestine slave trade.

The Commodore used this opportunity to tell the King that, by having established his power by conquest, the due application of laws and the supremacy of his army, he was fully entitled to consider himself sole master of the island. The Commodore's offer to train a number of young Malagasy as sailors was accepted by Radama. On return from his victorious campaign he held a great Kabary, in which he told his people in grandiloquent language that the whole island was his, that guns and spears could now sleep; that his army was ready to quell any rebellion; that it was for his people to cultivate the waste land, to work, as gold and silver would not be poured down upon them from the skies.<sup>1</sup>

Radama's greatest ambition was to emulate Napoleon I,

<sup>1</sup> W. Ellis, *History of Madagascar*, p. 370.

but in his personal feelings he was evidently as much drawn to the French as to the English. That British influence was predominant was due, apart from his love for Hastie, to his desire to introduce civilization, in which the English missionaries were bearing so great a part. That they used their privileged position was natural, and perhaps equally naturally so, to the detriment of the French, who, as Roman Catholics, were considered a terrible danger to these ardent Protestants. The Rev. Jones frankly reports on this in a letter, where he mentions the King having asked him for an explanation of the difference between Protestantism and Catholicism. Into the ears of the pagan king were poured forth the deeds of the Inquisition and the way the Spaniards had converted the peoples of South America to Christianity. When, therefore, Radama was approached by one of the French traders on behalf of a priest in Bourbon with the request to accept him as a teacher of his people, he refused.

There is no uncertain sound in the King's letter<sup>1</sup> that the treaty made between him and the English Government had secured for him all the personnel required.

' . . . men of your profession, missionaries like you, but Protestants, which prevents me from inviting you,' he wrote. 'My refusal is due to a legitimate cause—namely, that the religion which you hold is not the same as of the Protestants to whom I have granted full liberty and protection in my states. Therefore I consider it best to inform you of this fact, in order to prevent you from undertaking a completely useless voyage, which would merely involve you in expense and expose you to the risk of falling ill. . . .'<sup>2</sup>

While British influence was thus being more and more firmly established in the capital, that of France was extending along the coast, but the climate claimed an awful toll. In Paris voices were raised against these enterprises in Ste Marie, as Madagascar had so often proved herself rebellious to all attempts at colonization.

At the same time certain strong supporters of the Madagascar scheme offered their services to make a success of it, suggesting,

<sup>1</sup> Radama, King of Madagascar to M. Pastre, missionary priest, October 1820.

<sup>2</sup> *Le Constitutionnel*, 10th June 1822.

instead of Ste Marie, Fort Dauphin as the healthier place, where cotton, fruit, and sago trees could be cultivated. Criticism on the frequent failure of gaining a strong foothold was not lacking, one cause being that of not having given a sufficiently impressive idea of French might; the other, having sought the friendship of lesser chiefs, neglecting the two leading rulers—and also in the valueless presents to Radama, while Great Britain gave those of great value.

It was evident that English methods of gaining influence were effective, because politic and far-seeing. Why not learn from the successful rivals? The Governor of Bourbon was urged to send an embassy to Radama, which might flatter his vanity; also to carry on an active propaganda among the chiefs, 'by means compatible with prudence, in order to counteract British interest'. Yet the writer feared that 'it will not be without trouble, in spite of our rights to the east coast, to combat their politics and their means of seduction'.<sup>1</sup>

It never seemed to strike the French officials that possibly the chief item in this seduction was the fact that England did not claim any territorial rights. However much Radama objected and protested against them, the French Government stuck to the arrangement arrived at between them and Great Britain at the Treaty of Amiens. Sylvain Roux again and again suggested that everything could be carried out in amity if only the English would concentrate their efforts on the western coast, and leave the French unhindered on the eastern. There was no pretension on the part of the French to object to the British flag flying in those waters; then why cause perpetual trouble to the French?

The haughty demand of Captain Fairfax Moresby, addressed to Sylvain Roux, to explain by whose authority and for what purpose he and his party had come to Ste Marie, was but one of these irritating incidents.

M. de Freycinet, who had succeeded Baron Milius as Governor of Bourbon, wrote very strongly to Paris to complain of the British captain's behaviour, and in particular 'the insolent vexations of the British and their abuse of power'.<sup>2</sup> M. de Freycinet's communications showed more and more plainly

<sup>1</sup> M. Frappaz to Baron Milius, Arch. Min. Col., Paris. 13th October 1819.

<sup>2</sup> November–December 1821, Arch. Min. Col.

that for him there were two alternatives only with regard to Madagascar. The one was to give in to Radama's claim to sole sovereignty, by giving him the title of King of Madagascar, and to accept his offer for Frenchmen, the more the better, to live in his realm, but as simple merchants only. The other alternative would be to retain the claimed territory by means of arms; but for that Parliament would have to grant authority and means. An unlikely thing!

M. de Freycinet felt justified in his fear of what he described as 'the disquietude of our rivals', assuring the Minister that to try to discover a justified cause for it would be useless. 'Time alone would put their intentions into full light.' The harassed patriot wished that he might know what exactly had happened between Radama and the Governor of Mauritius for the former to have ever since then assumed the title of King of Madagascar. 'He has no right to it, for Madagascar has been a French possession', so he wrote. M. de Freycinet had not read Captain Lesage's report, in which that secret is made plain. As to the real designs of Sir Robert, and the reason for sending warships, these were plainly stated by him at this very time in a letter to Lord Bathurst.<sup>1</sup>

This is what Farquhar wrote:

'The rise in our vicinity of a new establishment offering facilities of extension and increase at Madagascar, from the great fertility of the country, abundance and the cheapness of provision, excellent harbours and the ease with which any number of the natives may be engaged in labour. It is indeed impossible to be without some apprehension, that the establishment of a French colony may tend to infringe upon the objects<sup>2</sup> of the treaty between H.M. Government and Radama. But your Lordship may be assured that every means in my power shall be exerted to counteract with Radama any sinister influence or proceeding that may be attempted to be practised by the French. . . .'

How well Sir Robert succeeded was evident, for although Radama wrote amiable letters to the Governor of Bourbon, he considered France a second-rate Power, whose demands and

<sup>1</sup> P.R.O. C.O. 167. 1821.

<sup>2</sup> As by then the slave trade had been abolished also by France, this cause of fear could no longer hold good.

claims could be ignored. The English, who made no claims to any territory, appeared to Radama very naturally as disinterested friends, the French, on the other hand, insidious foes, encroaching on his sovereignty. The ruler of the Hovas could not possibly realize that to England, as a great maritime power, small territorial acquisitions were of no value whatever, unless as naval bases. Mauritius offered all that was wanted. How could Radama know that France, having lost her ports by losing the Ile de France, had to secure for herself a harbour in these seas; apart even from the traditional conception that authority could be established only by occupation of territory, however limited in area?

To him these two distinct aspects of policy were incomprehensible, and he therefore did not fear British influence, especially as exercised in so benign a form as treaties of amity, gifts of money, rich presents, but chiefly by the beneficent effect of the missionaries' activity in furthering civilization.

On the other hand, the reoccupation of those several small areas of territory by the French, and their systematic exploration of the country by experts of geology, botany, etc., bore for him a sinister aspect.

Jean René, as the man who had the greatest influence over Radama, was petted and courted alike by the governors of the two colonies. They found him, however, rather changeable in his sympathies; now favouring the French, now the English. On the other hand, his personal affection for both Hastie and Roux was true and unswerving.

Sylvain Roux, at Jean René's request, had taken his son and a nephew to France to be educated. In fact, the Chief of Tamatave had asked the King of France—as one equal to another—to take these two boys under his care. That Louis XVIII did so, Sir Robert had occasion to witness, for when at the court in Paris, he saw the two Madagascar princes 'being made much of by the royal ladies'.

The delicate health of Jean René's son made his return necessary, while the nephew Borera remained in Paris 'enjoying the goodwill of the King and the affection of the royal princes and of the Minister of the Navy'.<sup>1</sup>

What Sir Robert had wished to achieve by taking Radama's

<sup>1</sup> M. de Freycinet to Jean René. 7th March, 1821, Arch. Min Col., Paris.

brothers to Mauritius, M. de Freycinet was only too pleased to accord to Jean René's relations. It was considered worth while training so intelligent and friendly a youth, destined to be ruler of an important tribe.

In the course of the next four years no great events happened in Tananarive. European civilization with regard to clothing, furniture, etc., was making great strides; the number of pupils was steadily increasing; education and Christianity were spreading, many Malagasy asking for baptism. Religious liberty gave every one a feeling of security, and great hopes for a healthy, flourishing native church were being cherished by the missionaries, whose numbers had been swelled by new arrivals. The artisans especially were winning approbation, as hundreds of youths were being taught crafts by them. Mills and manufactures were being established; soap was made, and the possibility of making gunpowder seemed within reach.

While these benefits of civilization were being developed in Imerina, Radama was frequently away quelling revolts by means of his excellent army. The Sakalava, especially, refused to remain under Hova domination, an attitude which never changed, and which opened up possibilities for the French to gain allies for future eventualities.

Outwardly all was going well for the missionaries, when unexpectedly Radama's feelings towards them cooled visibly. The rapid increase in the number of people taught Christianity was becoming an offence to many of the leading Hovas. Radama, conscious of a strong cross-current of opposition, said one day to Hastie that, although he was happy to have him to consult and the missionaries to teach his people, 'Yet so,' he added, 'let me not go too slowly, lest I miss my aim, nor too fast, lest I stumble.'

It was a sad day for the King when Hastie succumbed to fever; the people too grieved at his death. Sorrow was general.

Radama mourned the loss of the 'faithful friend who has been a husband of Madagascar', as he expressed it; 'and the good he has done cannot be too highly spoken of'. The body of the erstwhile runaway son of an Irish miller was laid to rest in foreign soil with such honours as a king alone can bestow, and with such tokens of mourning as love alone can call forth.

Escorted by Hova Grenadiers and amid the firing of salutes, the body was carried to a tomb specially built by orders of the King.

To Sir Robert Farquhar he wrote to announce the death 'of the enlightened and faithful agent of the British Government at my Court . . . a friend and a father, who could conduct himself in such a manner as to attract the affections of persons of every rank among my subjects'.<sup>1</sup>

Sylvain Roux, who had died a few years previously, a victim of the climate, was succeeded as Commander of the Isle de Ste Marie by an equally energetic man, M. Blevet. Again voices were raised against this settlement, as of small value to France.

Meanwhile Radama occupied several of the places claimed by the French, and to M. de Freycinet's remonstrances for making war on the natives in French possessions, the King replied 'that there could be no question of war, as he was on his own territory'.

Jean René explained this claim by the right he himself had given Radama in 1817 to the east coast, when he made a treaty with him putting all that coast under his rule. As to the title of King of Madagascar, to which the French officer objected, Radama declared that he took the title 'because he had the power to enforce it'.

There were thus two irreconcilable claims, which created a condition of perpetual friction between the authorities of Madagascar and those of France. Radama's claim to sovereignty and to the title of King of Madagascar was met by an equally uncompromising refusal of recognition as such. These contradictory claims could be settled only by means of war—but the unhappy Governor of Bourbon had no authority to act, nor sufficient means at his disposal to do so. Meanwhile Radama took Tintingue and declared that he would in person go to Ste Marie to receive the oath of allegiance from the populace.

For some years past Radama had introduced customs dues, when suddenly news spread that he had farmed out these dues to a rich merchant of Mauritius, for the annual sum of 70,000 francs, but without stipulating what duties to levy.

<sup>1</sup> P.R.O. Col. Office, 23, X, 1826.



For once the two Governors were faced by a situation equally unfavourable to both colonies. Joint action in the way of remonstrance to Radama was agreed upon. General Lowry, who felt that Madagascar would suffer from this monopoly, as much as Mauritius and Bourbon, was ready to make strong representations, and, if necessary, to take more severe measures. To the Comte de Cheffontaine's great surprise and disappointment, the British Governor, when it came to the point, nevertheless refused the request to join in a boycott of Madagascar in order to bring Radama to his senses. General Lowry explained this as incompatible with the treaty made by Sir Robert with Radama.<sup>1</sup>

Six months later the King fell ill. This was the moment for those who had been opposed to his policy of Europeanization to speed up a conspiracy that had been carried on for some time, with the intent to raise to the throne one of the King's wives who was also his adopted sister, rather than the heir presumptive. Radama had appointed his eldest sister's son as successor, who, brought up in the mission school, could be expected to carry on his uncle's liberal policy. This the reactionary party could not tolerate. Therefore, when the King died, the conspirators secured the help of certain military leaders and court officials.

The fact that the King had died was kept hidden from the people, but a great Kabary was held at which the oath was to be taken 'to whomsoever the King might be pleased to appoint as his successor'. *Carte blanche* having thus been secured by the conspirators, the nation was informed three days after Radama's death that 'the King had joined his ancestors'.

<sup>1</sup> *Paris Correspondence politique*, Madagascar Arch. du Min. des Affaires Etrangères, vol. i.

## *Chapter VI*

### RAVALO THE CRUEL

AFTER having done away with practically every one who could cause her difficulties, Ravalomanjaka, as she styled herself, began her rule as the apparently omnipotent sovereign of Madagascar.

However, the diviners, who had been kept for so long in the background, now reasserted themselves, meaning to rule supreme and to revenge themselves for years of neglect. To them and to her ancestors the Queen owed loyalty; to carry out their will was to be for her the Alpha and Omega of her foreign policy.

From this time on what happened in Madagascar had its repercussion in London, as well as in Paris, assuming increasing importance, not only to groups of men, but to the Cabinets of London and of Paris. The interests of Europeans in Madagascar became the subject-matter not merely of inter-departmental, but also of diplomatic correspondence. The statesmen of Great Britain claimed at different times to have a word to say in Madagascar affairs, much to the surprise of the Ministers of France.

The history of Ravalomanjaka's reign of thirty-three years can be followed from the records in the archives of both Governments; they reveal a continuous clash between opposing forces; between hatred of foreigners and economic benefits; between an unreasoning clinging to ancestral customs and international interests; between the unyielding attitude of 'not a finger's breadth of soil to become the property of foreigners' and the claim of France to her ancient rights of territory.

The days of this queen present a lurid picture. Out of a background of darkness and blood rises the figure of a terrible woman—dressed in Paris fashion, yet the devotee of idols; a sovereign possessed by the lust of power and of cruelty; a ruler living in seclusion, because too divine to be approached by her people, who had to carry out her will at the threat of

horrors of torture; a queen whose deliberate aim was the extermination of the manhood of all other than the Hova tribe, as a means of preventing revolt, and for the enriching of her favourites and soldiers by female slaves and possessions. Yet, this ruthless woman was a doting mother, whose only son, strong in the consciousness of that love, dared with impunity to counteract, where possible, her nefarious decrees of slaughter.

These various sides to the personality of the Queen have provided the theme for many a writer; the gruesome and the incongruous being naturally what causes the greatest interest. But apart from these colourful descriptions, as provided by eyewitnesses, there is a wearisome monotony of happenings. It is the monotony of the physical and mental suffering of her subjects, and a sameness in foreign relations.

The reign of Ranavaloa I may be considered from a four-fold point of view: from the religious—persecution; from that of her subjects—nothing but tragedy; from the economic—of a surprising industrial activity in and around the capital; from the political—a deadlock.

In order fully to appreciate these four aspects, it seems advisable to treat them separately, beginning with the religious.

On her ascent to the throne the Queen found herself faced by the undeniable fact that Christianity had struck deep roots in Imerina.

During the past ten years, since Radama had given his protection to the missionaries, 15,000 of his subjects had learnt to read; many also to write.<sup>1</sup> The artisans, whom the ordained missionaries considered their best collaborators, had for their part fulfilled the King's hopes. Workshops of every kind had been opened; one thousand five hundred skilled workmen for iron-work, also carpenters, masons, tanners, shoemakers, etc., had been trained. At the moment of the King's death, six hundred youths were serving their apprenticeship. In one hundred schools four thousand pupils were being taught. The printing press was turning out thousands of primers and other booklets, also copies of the New Testament. The translation of the Bible was nearing completion. The number of baptisms had steadily increased. There was thus every ground for expecting the development of a healthy native church.

<sup>1</sup> Rev W Ellis. *Three Visits to Madagascar*. London, 1859.

The question was anxiously asked by missionaries, what the attitude of the Queen would be towards Christianity. Her first pronouncement was reassuring—namely, that she would not alter anything that Radama had sanctioned with regard to education. On the other hand she informed Dr. Lyall, Hastie's successor, that she had no use for a British Agent; that she did not feel bound by any treaties the late King had made; that nevertheless she would not revoke the prohibition for the exportation of Malagasy, but she would not accept the equivalent hitherto given by the British Government.

It was not until the coronation that the clarion call of the new régime was sounded. At this ceremony, outward signs of civilization and of unmitigated barbarity were blended. Accompanied by soldiers in the uniform of British Grenadiers, the Queen visited the tomb of Radama's father, where she received from the hands of the idol-keepers two idols, which were then carried in procession to the place where the coronation was to take place. The Queen took a seat on a platform flanked by eight thousand soldiers, and the ceremonies of the coronation and of taking the oath of fealty were solemnized in the presence of sixty thousand people.

Almost more important than the Queen herself were the idols; one a cornelian the size of a pigeon's egg, the other a green diamond-shaped stone; each fastened to the top of a staff. These idols the Queen addressed thus: 'My predecessors have given you to me. I put my trust in you. Therefore, support me.'

The missionaries witnessed this performance with apprehension. All too soon they had occasion to realize that reaction had set in. A month later Mr. Freeman wrote sadly: 'The idols and diviners govern all things, as they did twenty years ago. Every superstition is renewed; the schools and divine service on the Sabbath in the native language are stopped, and I do not know when things will wear a more pleasing aspect.' Alas, never again, although three months later the permission was given for the schools to be reopened, but every possible means was used to hinder the spread of education and of Christianity. All officers, who had accepted copies of the Gospels had to return them 'by order of the Queen'.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> W. Ellis, *History of Madagascar*, p. 429.

The first European to suffer from the wrath of the idols was Dr. Lyall, accused of having violated one of their sanctuaries by the too near approach of his horse. The keepers of the idols were delighted to have this pretext for hounding out of Imerina the sorcerer, for as such the Englishman was considered.<sup>1</sup> Thus, even before the unwanted British Agent was able to take his departure, he was ignominiously driven out of his home and expelled from the country.

Hundreds of snakes were brought in sacks and let loose in his courtyard. Dr. Lyall was dragged out of the house; then, held by both arms, he was led out, accompanied by an escort of fifty men; twenty-five to each side, walking in single file, every one holding a snake by the head, their bodies wriggling in the air. A ludicrous sight this, the first triumph for the forces of reaction; but a bad omen for all those who believed in Radama's policy of progress.

A year after Radama's death, his widow gave birth to a son<sup>2</sup> whom she proclaimed his son and her heir. Who the actual father of the child was, was an open secret; namely one of the late King's most enlightened, most intelligent and energetic officials, the General-in-Chief who had helped her to ascend the throne. He had tried to use his position and his influence over the Queen to keep a check on her reactionary tendencies. His sympathy for Christianity and civilization was generally known. This brilliant officer was hated by the idol-keepers, and among his comrades jealousy was rife. His reign therefore did not last long; those who supplanted him in the Queen's affections falsely accused him of treason and sorcery. His replies to the accusation were incorrectly reported to the Queen, who, having been made intoxicated, condemned him to death.

Those sent to carry out the sentence found him reading the New Testament. If he met his fate quietly, unresistingly, to her came a terrible awakening. Haunted by dreams, she did all to soothe what she believed to be his spirit. Although the reasons for his execution were made public, it was generally

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Lyall was a naturalist whose collection of reptiles and insects had aroused suspicion.

<sup>2</sup> After her ascent to the throne it had been decided by a council that the Queen could not remarry, but she was free to have lovers, and all children borne by her were to be considered those of Radama I.

believed that the real cause was 'his being too closely related to the heir to the throne'.<sup>1</sup>

If the influence of the first favourite had been beneficial to the general welfare of the people, not so that of his successor, the Prime Minister, who abused his position to the detriment of the State. He withheld the letters sent to the Queen by the Governors of Bourbon and of Mauritius, and wrote insulting replies, as though from the Queen, signing them with her name. He hated the foreigners and he loved war, because it meant booty. He found himself, however, in opposition to the Ministers who, members of the old Hova party, and supported by the people, favoured the abandonment of the coastal possessions, as occasion for war. The hereditary province of Imerina was to suffice. The officers, on the other hand, made common cause with the favourite, who, in the end, had to pay with his life, being killed by the infuriated people with the consent of the Ministers, as being the cause of the bombardment of Tamatave.

His successor in the Queen's favour was his own brother. He became accessory to, and at times instigator of most of her terrible acts of cruelty, and in his position of Prime Minister he was a useful executor of her policy of reaction and spoliation.

The Queen's antagonism to Christianity showed itself at first only in her decrees against education and in an increasingly unfriendly attitude towards the missionaries. Therefore they were not surprised when she desired certain of their number to leave the country, under the pretext that, according to a law passed by Radama, no foreigner could stay in Imerina more than ten years, unless he became a Hova subject.

This unfriendly attitude towards Christians and Englishmen was deeply resented by the Rev. J. J. Freeman, who wrote to Lord Palmerston: 'The Hovas are not meeting the ends proposed by the British Government in reference to Madagascar in the liberal assistance rendered. . . . England made Radama what he was, and we have made the Hovas what they are. . . .'<sup>2</sup>

The accuracy of this statement was corroborated by a shrewd observer, who, in his report to the Governor of Bourbon, wrote concerning the work of the English in Imerina, as an

<sup>1</sup> M. Dupré, *Trois mois de séjour à Madagascar*, p. 127.    <sup>2</sup> P.R.O., May 1832.

explanation of the pro-British tendencies<sup>1</sup> among the Hovas: 'One must not forget that England has supported for so many years in the very heart of the Hovas, at Tananarive, a numerous religious mission, composed of active, cultivated, and devoted men; also of very skilful political agents, as well as military instructors and master-workmen of all trades. It should be borne in mind that these religious, political, military, and industrial missionaries, have educated a large number of the present generation of Hovas. They have converted them to the Protestant religion and have taught them English; and have inspired them with a great admiration for the power and riches of England, and have created a belief in her superiority over all other nations.'

What complicated matters alike for the missionaries and the natives was the Queen's vacillating policy. What to-day was forbidden, was to-morrow again permitted, and vice versa. There was no certainty of continuity; yet printing continued, and schools. The only foreigners in unvarying favour were the artisans, for the Queen, in spite of her reactionary policy, liked European goods and appreciated industrial benefits. The things she chiefly desired were cannon and gunpowder; the native chiefs were supplied at Majunga by American traders. She wished the Hova Government alone to have arms. The traders of the two colonies could not supply sufficient of these coveted articles of commerce, the Governors persistently refusing the Queen's solicitations to legalize and assist that trade. The answer was always the same: 'Governments as such are not traders in arms and munitions.'

At this very time M. de Solages, Préfet Apostolique<sup>2</sup> de Bourbon, landed in Tamatave, with intent to proceed to Tananarive. He cherished the bold hope of being able to win the Queen to Christianity, which would open the door to missionary work. Having been kept waiting a week before being received by Coroller,<sup>3</sup> Governor of Tamatave, M. de Solages was told to write to the Queen, and to remain where he was until she granted him permission to proceed to the capital.

<sup>1</sup> 1844 Report of the Intendant of Bourbon to the Governor.

<sup>2</sup> Colonial bishop.

<sup>3</sup> This half-breed was a cultured man, whose favourite author was Macchiavelli, and it has been contended that he was the instructor of the Hova rulers in all the worst tricks of European diplomacy.

As no answer came to either the first or to a second letter, the undaunted ecclesiastic decided to go incognito to Tananarive. Apparently not hindered in doing so, he travelled alone and under exceptional hardships as far as Andovarante. Here, only six days from his goal, he was suddenly stopped by order of the Governor of Tamatave, and compelled to live in a miserable hut, bereft of food, ill with fever, a virtual prisoner.

Rumours of this reached the Governor of Bourbon. As five Hova officials were at that moment paying a visit to that colony, Admiral Cavillier entrusted them with a letter to the Queen. As her envoys professed not to have even heard of M. de Solages, the admiral feared that the letters of the Préfet Apostolique had been intercepted. He therefore wrote to the Queen that 'somewhere' within her realm 'this respectable priest was being detained, owing to intrigues of which she was ignorant'. He therefore begged Her Majesty to liberate M. de Solages, 'whose sole motive for going to Madagascar had been zeal for the propagation of Christianity and civilization among her subjects'.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the helpless traveller had found a tragic end, having been assassinated by order of the Queen.<sup>2</sup> This fact was not generally known, but rumours were rife that he had been poisoned; an allegation impossible to disprove. The Governor of Tamatave, however, sent to Admiral Cavillier an official intimation 'that M. de Solages had died of fever at Andovarante on the route to Tananarive' on 8th December 1832.

The fact that there was no English resident gave naturally a greater impetus to French trade and 'a loss to British commerce'; so wrote Mr. Baker, the missionary printer, to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Freeman, equally conscious of this drawback, wrote to suggest that the Queen might be won over to accept an agent, if a present of cannon were made her by the British Government.<sup>4</sup> The reverend gentleman felt sure that these cannon would not ever be used against the donors. This suggestion was not accepted, while the offer to supply the Government

<sup>1</sup> George Goyau, *Les Grands Desseins Missionnaires de Henri de Solages*.

<sup>2</sup> In 1896 the Prime Minister when in exile in Algiers told this as a fact to his Intendant, M. Vassé.

<sup>3</sup> P.R.O., 1832, to the Rt. Hon. Stanley.

<sup>4</sup> 1830.



with information, which he made two years later, met with better success.<sup>1</sup> His salary was paid by the Government, Mr. Freeman acting as unofficial British Agent.

The storm against foreigners and Christianity, which had been gathering for several years, at last broke out in full fury in 1835. The Queen was ready to believe anything against the hated sect, also that baptism was an oath of allegiance to a foreign power. What gave an aspect of truth to this belief was a report, which reached her, that at a meeting a Christian slave had urged his hearers to forsake the idols, and to serve Jehovah and Jesus Christ. Here was proof positive of a conspiracy, for, so the informers told the infuriated Queen, 'Jehovah is the first King of the English and Jesus Christ the second'.

Among other incidents which caused the gathering storm to break out was the conversion of a diviner, who publicly destroyed his idols and charms.<sup>2</sup> Extraordinary statements were made by an unenlightened fanatic, whose doctrines seemed to the Queen insults on herself, not to speak of the idols. She therefore decided to make an end of Christianity, hitherto tolerated, though perpetually interfered with. One day, being carried past a chapel whence sounds of singing reached her, she said to her attendants: 'These people will not leave off until some of their heads are taken off.'

From that day on her policy of toleration came to an end. She called a great Kabary for March 1st, which even the children were to attend. On February 26th the missionaries received a letter from the Queen addressed 'to all Europeans, English and French', which confirmed their worst fears. Although granting them for themselves liberty of worship, and permission to teach arts and sciences to her people, all religious teaching and practices were prohibited to her subjects. 'That which has been established by my ancestors, I cannot permit to be changed,' she wrote.

The same message was read aloud at the Kabary, at which 150,000 people were gathered. The hearts of thousands failed as they heard the inexorable statement reiterated, with the refrain: 'I abhor it that any man should wish to alter the

<sup>1</sup> P.R.O., Minutes No. 71, 1832.

<sup>2</sup> Except a few, which were sent to England as a proof of his conversion.

customs of our ancestors.' Two facts were emphasized: 'no rivalry with her sovereignty, and no belittlement of the idols'. 'Is it not I alone that rule? Baptism, societies, places of worship, are they to rule? No! 'Who dares to say that the idols are nothing? By them the twelve sovereigns have been established, who counted them sacred. Are the people to esteem them as nothing?'

Having thus stated her power and that of the idols, a proclamation was read by which the Queen called upon one and all who had been baptized, or who had attended meetings in private houses, to accuse themselves of it, under penalty of death. She set the term of one month as the limit for this self-accusation. All masters having Christian slaves were to denounce them; no scholars were to observe Christian practices, and any one, when asked, even in ordinary conversation, whether anything was true, was 'to swear by the ancestors and the idols'.<sup>1</sup>

This terrible decree, which touched high and low alike, created an atmosphere of despair. Then, as spokesman of all educated Hovas, one of the chiefs made a diplomatic speech, in which he pointed out that it had been by Radama's wish that they, their wives and children, had learnt from the missionaries 'wisdom and knowledge, with intent to promote the welfare of the country. We now confess our guilt and we crave pardon,' he said, and then asked the Queen to accept a bullock and a dollar, as fine and as a pledge, that nothing of the kind would happen again.

This speech relaxed the tension for a moment, to be intensified by the next speech, made by the favourite. He emphasized the insult Christianity offered the idols, and also the heinousness of the offence of trying to change ancestral customs. He assured the Queen that he and his party would themselves cut off the heads of all those who had failed to accuse themselves within the month.

The result of this decree was that, hoping to escape death, crowds at once accused themselves. This made the Queen reduce the term to one week, instead of the month. In punishment, thousands were made slaves, and four hundred officers were degraded.

<sup>1</sup> The Christians had acquired the habit of merely replying, 'Verily it is so'.

In anticipation of the outbreak of persecution, and the probable destruction of the Bible, of which the first edition had just been published, seventy bound copies were buried.

It is impossible to tell here in detail the history of the persecution of the Christians which Ranavalo I ruthlessly pursued. The great outbreaks were in 1837, 1840, 1849, and 1857. The best proof of the steadfastness of the Christians is the Queen's proclamation, made in May 1840, at a great Kabary:

'With respect to these people who pray and read the books of the foreigners, I have admonished them several times, yet they persevere in opposing my will. Some have been put to death, others have been reduced to perpetual slavery, others fined and reduced in rank for praying and worshipping the god of the white people. But they contrive to pray in spite of all I do.'<sup>1</sup>

Christians were put to death in a variety of ways, of which the diary of the Queen's Armourer, Jean Laborde, mentions these few:<sup>2</sup> 'Four nobles have been burnt alive; one woman and three men; fourteen others have been hurled from the rock which is next to the palace.'

The methods employed by the Queen to eradicate Christianity included chaining and flogging her victims, flinging them into boiling water, or sawing their spines asunder. But her pet system was testing innocence by means of poison. Thus in 1843 two young Malagasy wrote to one of the missionaries: 'Twelve thousand have drunk tanghinia,<sup>3</sup> three thousand have died.'

By 1836 all the missionaries had left. There was nothing they could do for their flock, and merely to look on at the Queen's ruthless measures was impossible, and she, for her part, had no longer any need, even of the artisans.

In her anti-foreign policy she was supported and encouraged by the old Hova party. The most fantastic suggestions were made to the Queen how best to keep the hated foreigners out of Madagascar: a great wall was to be built around it in the sea; a gigantic pair of scissors was to be erected on the route to Tananarive to cut any intruder in two; etc., etc. Personally, the Queen believed her policy of decrees prohibiting any

<sup>1</sup> W. Ellis, *The Martyr Church*, p. 148.

<sup>2</sup> Arch. Quai d'Orsay, March 1849. Col. Pol. Madagascar.

<sup>3</sup> Tanghinia veneniflora.

foreigner to put foot on her territory to be sufficiently effective. In fact, she did succeed in creating an invisible Chinese Wall around her realm, within which she gave free reign to her thirst for blood, while at the very same time her envoys were being received in audience at Windsor.

A reign of terror was devastating Madagascar. Lawlessness increased, for the terrified people, to escape the exactions of the Queen and of her officials, fled *en masse* into the forests. There they felt safe from the *corvée*, which made them the unpaid labourers, not only of the Government, but of every officer, every official, every lady-in-waiting. The Queen paid no salaries; instead, she gave to every one of her servants the right to labour and to her officers the possibility of securing booty and slaves.

There were perpetual expeditions against other tribes, and the leaders returned with 400 to 10,000 slaves—mostly women and children.

In spite of her hatred of foreigners the Queen found herself unable to do without two Frenchmen, who, each in his own sphere, came to play an important part in the economic life of Imerina.

During Radama's life the commercial firm of Rautoney and Arnaux of Bourbon had been the leading traders with Madagascar. Their representative, M. Lastelle, gained great influence with Ranavalo I by means of gifts, and in order to secure privileges denied to foreigners, such as owning land, he gave up his nationality and became Hova.

With the Queen as his partner, he established a sugar refinery and a rum distillery at Mohéla. She provided the labour, which cost her nothing as it was by *corvée*; he the capital and machinery. To make sure of her share, the Queen had a comptroller on the spot. The annual output was 500,000 kilograms of sugar, and 1,000 barrels of rum; while the annual gain, including the sale of rice and oxen, amounted to 2,840,000 francs.<sup>1</sup>

In 1841 the Queen's partner and man of confidence went on her behalf to Paris to purchase by her order, for her personal use and for the decoration and furnishing of her palaces, the most beautiful, luxurious, and elegant goods that

<sup>1</sup> Arch. Quai d'Orsay. Col. Pol. Madagascar, vol. ii, 1843.

the shops and manufacturers of Paris had to offer. In reward for having satisfactorily carried out her orders, she raised him to the rank of prince.

The Queen farmed the customs of the southern ports to M. Lastelle, and found him in every way a valuable commercial and industrial agent, but one thing he could not do for her, and that was to make guns and gunpowder for her.

It was in connexion with this great want that the second indispensable Frenchman came into Ranavaloa I's life, namely, Jean Laborde. What Hastie had been to Radama, and also to English interests, this man was to be to Radama's widow and to French interests. Loyal men, true patriots, they could not act otherwise.

Jean Laborde's entry upon the stage of Madagascar was not only dramatic, but characteristic of the courage, resourcefulness, and altruism of the man. The ship on which he was travelling from India was flung by a tempest on the rocks, not far from the shore. The vessel was in danger of being dashed to pieces when Laborde, having tied a rope to his left arm, jumped into the surf and managed to swim to the shore and fasten the cable to the rocks, thanks to which every man on board was saved.<sup>1</sup>

This had happened not far from the establishment in Mohéla of M. Lastelle, who warmly welcomed his compatriot. Having discovered that the shipwrecked man was a master mechanic, who had had in India his own workshop, for mending steam engines and other machinery, and also a gun-factory, Lastelle sent him, with a recommendation, to the Queen.

According to Malagasy law, every shipwrecked person became a slave of the Queen. Realizing what a valuable asset the waves had brought her, she promised the young Frenchman his freedom after five years, if during that time he would serve her loyally with his skill and knowledge.<sup>2</sup> This he promised to do. As it happened, Fate was giving the son of a blacksmith and saddle-maker of Languedoc the chance of his life, a field where his genius for mechanics, his inventiveness and skill, were to find the fullest outlet, for which his experiences in India had prepared him.

<sup>1</sup> R. P. de la Vassière, *Histoire de Madagascar*, vol. i.

<sup>2</sup> Ida Pfeiffer, *Voyage à Madagascar*, 1881. Paris.

Having left the Army as an under-officer, he had come to the rescue of a distracted official, whom a rajah had commanded to produce three hundred trumpets within a few days; but which no one on the spot knew how to make. Laborde offered to fulfil the command, and, with the money paid him, started a workshop; and finally, having made his fortune and having heard of copper mines in the south of Madagascar, he realized his capital and took ship.

Bereft of everything, he now began his new existence as the slave of the Queen, and that in 1836,<sup>1</sup> when anti-foreign tendencies were most active.

That this Frenchman nevertheless won his way to a place of general love and trust—having had to overcome hatred of foreigners, jealousy and suspicion—was due to his tact, surprising skill, never-failing patience, and genuine kindliness. This jet-sam on the shores of Madagascar came in time to be addressed as 'Father' by the Queen; and to the people his word, always for what was good, was to have the value of an order, not to be gainsaid.

Jean Laborde became the Queen's Armourer. He began by making muskets for her, in the factory of a man who had not succeeded in doing so; then also cannon and mortars, for which she gave him a large sum of money. As the site of the factory was unhealthy, the Queen granted Laborde's request for a vast stretch of land, not far from the capital, well provided with water. Here he created a manufacturing centre, where workshops and factories, one after the other, were erected. He also made agricultural establishments and plantations of sugar cane, founded sugar refineries and silkworm nurseries. In time Mantasoa became a marvel with its rivers, artificial lake and gardens, where, in enchanting surroundings, the Queen and her officials had their summer houses. These were vast buildings made of stone, with columns of pink granite. Here Laborde had his home,<sup>2</sup> where, like a patriarch, he lived among his people. Here great fêtes were given, when rockets, which he made, delighted the eye.

Thanks to the unlimited man-power put at his disposal, canals had been dug, and water-power for the mills provided. He had an iron foundry, where guns, cannon, and cannon

<sup>1</sup> He was born in 1801.    <sup>2</sup> Docteur Vinson, *Voyage à Madagascar*, 1865.

balls were made, and a gunpowder factory. Porcelain and glass manufactories, and every kind of workshop necessary for producing what the Queen demanded, were erected. The 'director of works' astonished every one, and chiefly his own workmen, by his ability to carry out the most difficult orders. They did not guess that he studied at night the *Encyclopaedia Roret*, a manual of mechanics he had ordered from France. While others slept, Jean Laborde studied, and in the morning he surprised his workmen by teaching them how to carry out a new task.

What made his achievements all the more astonishing was the difficulty of securing the necessary raw materials, as well as coal and charcoal, which had to be brought on the backs of men and animals, and that from great distances. The question of labour, of course, greatly troubled Laborde, to whom the system of *corvée* was abhorrent. The *corvée* labourers often escaped. The large sum the Queen had paid him for the first guns, he expended in paying wages to the workmen, but once that had been spent he could not do much. At the height of his activity Laborde had nevertheless a permanent body of twelve hundred men, masons, smiths, carpenters, turners, tanners, iron-smelters, to whom he tried to pay wages.

What greatly helped him in his enterprise was the fact that the English artisans<sup>1</sup> had taught improved methods of the manufacture of ironwork for machinery and tools, carpentry and joinery, tanning and dressing of hides, boot- and shoe-making, also brick- and tile-making. Chief among these artisans had been Mr. Cameron, with whom the Queen went into partnership in his soap manufactory. He discovered from which plants to obtain potash and soda, and found minerals from which sulphur could be extracted. He constructed water-mills for the Queen, dug canals, brought water to Tananarive from a distance of some miles, and built a large reservoir.

Even Laborde's genius would not have sufficed to effect what he did, had there not been those skilled workmen trained in the course of sixteen years. Radama's desire for artisans to teach his people crafts had thus been fulfilled.

A French officer, in his report to the Government, gave the following testimony to this fact: 'Under the direction of the

<sup>1</sup> James Sibree, *Fifty Years in Madagascar*, 1923, p. 36.

English missionaries the Hovas have reached a degree of civilization of which one has no real idea in Europe; their civilization, although mixed with their ancient customs, is nevertheless remarkable.<sup>1</sup> To the various enterprises started before his time, Laborde added horticultural plantations, to test what vegetables and other useful plants might be grown with profit.

The great hydraulic wheels, the smelting furnaces he erected were the visible signs of a master mind at work. His activities were extraordinarily varied, and his influence was always used for the betterment of the Malagasy, whose fate lay like a heavy burden on his gentle, loving heart. Although he remained a French subject, he identified himself with the people by marrying a native wife, by whom he had a son. It has been said of him that 'he was the only European to have perfectly grasped the customs and the character of the Hova. He spoke their language perfectly and made himself indispensable to them.'<sup>2</sup>

His day book, into which he entered all that happened,<sup>3</sup> even to when the first cheese had been made, is the finest record of his achievements.

What it must have meant to him to witness all the suffering of the people can be imagined, and wherever he could do so he intervened on their behalf. To his brother he wrote concerning the Queen:

'I am convinced that in spite of all the crimes of which she is, so to say, the cause, she is not as wicked as it is said. She is a good mother and has still other good qualities, which would astonish those who hear only of the crimes committed in her name. Unfortunately, fanaticism has made her undeniably barbarous.'<sup>4</sup>

In this barbarity the Queen was abetted by her favourite, of whom it was said 'that he was at the same time the inspirer and the executioner and the auxiliary, as cruel as herself in all exactions, assassinations, and depredations, which made her reign one of terror'.

If Laborde was the Queen's Armourer and her director of

<sup>1</sup> Arch. Min. Col., Paris.

<sup>2</sup> *Voyage à Madagascar*, par M. Guarzin, Capitaine d'Artillerie.

<sup>3</sup> Studied by the author. For instance, 'To-day the first cheese was made . . .'

<sup>4</sup> Arch. Quai d'Orsay, Col. Pol. Madagascar, 28th April 1858.



works, the man she respected and honoured, he was still more dear to her only son, Prince Rakotond. In this atmosphere of evil and barbarity, left without any education, the only good influence for the boy amidst a corrupt court was the gentle-hearted Frenchman. The son of his father, Prince Rakotond had good proclivities, but it was Laborde, whom he loved tenderly, who inculcated noble ideas and right principles into the son of that terrible queen. Thus, when the Prince was grown up, he became the good genius of his people, his aim being to prevent, where possible, the execution of his mother's sanguinary orders, or to compel the nobles to feed the miserable people working for them under the *corvée*.

The Prince had gathered around him a band of friends, who acted as his guard of honour, and who carried out his benign intentions for the relief of the oppressed. They were sent to prevent the Queen's orders being carried out, by arriving on the scene in the nick of time. These friends served the Prince as eyes, as feet. Many are the stories which the people cherished of this Hova prince, in which his goodness and courtesy and right value of human life are demonstrated.

It was said of Prince Rakotond that his one dread was 'that her subjects might not love their sovereign'. Yet how could they love a ruler whose bloodthirsty whims and devilish schemes for exterminating them meant but anguish, torture, death? Thus, for instance, the whim took Ranavalo to go for a four months' buffalo hunt. Fifty thousand people were mobilized to serve her pleasure during that time. Like a snowball her retinue grew as she passed along, all the villagers, men, women, and children, having to join it. Every night walls had to be built around the camp, hedges had to be made, the forest cleared. This hunt cost just ten thousand lives!

Another time her officers killed five thousand men of a tribe which they had been sent to subjugate. Resistance being useless, the tribe had made its submission. The men were taken apart to swear the oath of fealty, and then they were massacred. The next thing was to separate all the boys of a certain height and to kill them, and then to divide the women and children among the troops.

No wonder that the heart of the Prince bled for his people, but that same heart loved his mother. The Queen could not

resist his pleadings, and therefore did her best to keep her orders secret from him. Personally, he alone could do what he liked. Thus one day, when her favourite accused him of wishing to become a Christian, the Queen exclaimed, 'Then let him! He is my son, my only son!'

But Rakatond did not become a Christian, although he felt drawn to Christianity, and would gladly have seen missionaries teach the people. His sympathies went out to the Roman Church, which was only natural, seeing his fatherly friend and adviser was a devout son of that Church.

When he was twenty-four years old the Prince made friends with another Frenchman who had become a *persona grata* with the Queen. This was M. Lambert, a warm-hearted Breton; cultured, worldly wise, charming. Having married a rich Creole of Mauritius, he became a successful business man and owner of coal mines in Sakalava territory at Ravatoube. During one of her campaigns the Queen, unable to get provisions for her troops at Fort Dauphin, asked M. Lambert to do so in one of his ships, and this he did.

This courteous act of a Frenchman, at a moment when her own behaviour towards foreigners was the subject of diplomatic representations, was so appreciated by the Queen that she invited him to Tananarive, where he was most graciously received in audience. Ranavalô I asked her guest in what way she could show him her great gratitude. Without hesitation, the patriotic Frenchman asked that the French five-franc piece might become legal currency in Madagascar—a boon to French trade.<sup>1</sup> The Queen at once granted the request.

M. Lambert stayed six weeks in Tananarive as Laborde's guest, and here he frequently saw Prince Rakotond. A warm friendship sprang up between the young business man and the heir to the throne, who poured into his new friend's sympathetic ears the story of his people's sufferings.

Most graciously dismissed by the Queen, Lambert was to carry out certain orders from her in France, and to return whenever he liked. To Laborde her friendliness seemed a good omen for the speedy return to her former policy towards foreign traders, which by now had been stopped for just ten years.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Until then only Mexican piastres were in use.

<sup>2</sup> 1845-55.

Lambert was soon to be disillusioned, for on arrival at Tamatave he was handed a letter from the Queen stating that she had learnt that on her territory a Frenchman was living (meaning his agent at the coal mine) and he was to take immediate steps to have him recalled.

Before, however, Lambert could do so, an attack was made on the small settlement, the agent was killed, and of the men the rest were taken as slaves to Tananarive, where Jean Laborde, with great difficulty, secured their release by paying a ransom of 3,500 francs.

The idea of Madagascar becoming a French protectorate had become for the Queen's son and heir, the only way of salvation for his unhappy nation. Foreign intervention seemed to him desirable, even urgently necessary. In 1847 he appealed to the French admiral at that time in Madagascar waters.<sup>1</sup> In 1852 he applied to the Governor of Bourbon. Finally he turned to Napoleon III with the definite request to make Madagascar a French protectorate. The Prince<sup>2</sup> sent a letter to this effect to the Emperor by Lambert, his trusted friend. Napoleon III, the ally of England, wishing to act circumspectly, sent the messenger to London to inform Lord Clarendon of the proposal. The only thing the British Minister could suggest was a joint Anglo-French company for trade and commerce. In reality, the noble Lord was horrified at such a possibility as a French protectorate, to which England would never agree. Napoleon, therefore, declined the offer.

Two years later, the two governments entered into an agreement<sup>3</sup> not to undertake any measures with regard to Madagascar, but, while recognizing the *status quo*, private and commercial enterprises were not excluded. As the doors of Madagascar were closed to foreigners, this clause was in the nature of a blank cheque, in anticipation of the open door.

In 1860<sup>4</sup> the Prince once more appealed to Napoleon III, offering the protectorate and expressing his readiness to resign all his claims to the throne, if so desired, if only troops were sent to assist in the overthrow of the Queen's rule. But once again political, and at that time also military, reasons prevented

<sup>1</sup> 1857 Contre-Amiral Cecile.

<sup>3</sup> Confirmed by a *note verbale* on 17th December 1859.

<sup>2</sup> 1854.

<sup>4</sup> 11th May 1860.

the Emperor from responding to this S O S. The helpless peoples of Madagascar were left a defenceless prey for the vulture on the throne of Radama I.

The Rev. W. Ellis, of the London Missionary Society, when at Mauritius, had twice tried in vain to get permission to visit Madagascar. Back in England he received news that he might come to Tananarive. Before leaving for Madagascar he had an interview with Lord Clarendon, who informed him of Prince Rakotond's letter to Napoleon III, and of all M. Lambert had told him concerning the wish for a French protectorate and of his own attitude towards such a proposition.

The Minister, without in any way giving an official character to Mr. Ellis's visit to Madagascar, authorized him to convey to the Queen certain vague expressions of hope that trade relations would soon be reopened.

For twenty years no Englishman had been to Tananarive, when in 1856 Mr. Ellis was received in audience by the Queen. On this occasion he told her that, although at her court in no official capacity, he could assure Her Majesty that the Queen of England was most anxious for the welfare of Madagascar; that she desired amicable relations with her; that England did not make any claims, nor did the Government intend to interfere in the internal affairs of the island. . . . To this the Queen replied that she, for her part, wished to be friendly with all nations. . . .

Mr. Ellis had several interviews with the Prince, whom he severely chided for such unfilial behaviour as to suggest foreign intervention. The Prince explained that he planned no evil against his mother; no harm would befall her, only her power to do evil would be limited.

Mr. Ellis, point-blank, suggested to the Prince that he must have been drunk when signing the letter to Napoleon; this the Prince stoutly denied. He admitted having discussed his country's plight with Laborde and Lambert,<sup>1</sup> who had assured him that in a protectorate alone would there be the desired security. He had therefore deliberately signed what his trusted friend had written.

In his report,<sup>2</sup> Mr. Ellis mentioned that the Prince asked him

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Lord Clarendon.

<sup>2</sup> W. Ellis, *op. cit.*

many questions, e.g. on the Crimean War; whether the existing relations of amity between the Governments of France and England were agreeable to the British people; was there any truth in the rumour that the French intended invading Madagascar? Mr. Ellis replied that it was mere newspaper report; nor was it true that England was hostile to Madagascar.

The question as to what constituted a protectorate was also discussed, but reading Mr. Ellis's explanation, one is inclined to suspect that a feeling of misgiving had crept into Prince Rakotond's heart. What his French friends had told him was somewhat different to what the Englishman now explained to him.

Lord Clarendon, as Foreign Minister of Great Britain, could not remain indifferent to the increase of French influence, which the fulfilment of Prince Rakotond's request to Napoleon III would naturally have brought about, but he overlooked the human side of the question when telling Mr. Ellis about the matter. The Minister ought to have foreseen the tragic consequences which a revelation of these plans to the Queen would have for the Prince.

What happened was that, while in Tananarive, Mr. Ellis gave away Prince Rakotond's secret. Although the Queen refused to give credence to these statements, suspicion was aroused in her heart against her son and against her dear 'Father' Laborde.

In 1857, soon after Mr. Ellis had left for Mauritius, M. Lambert returned to Tananarive, after an absence of two years. With him came an enterprising Viennese lady, a famous traveller, for whom he had received the Queen's permission to accompany him to the capital. Frau Ida Pfeiffer, who, as well as Lambert, enjoyed Laborde's generous hospitality for some weeks, had every opportunity for observing life in Tananarive. What she observed with shrewdness, without national bias, and without preconceived ideas, she noted in her diary; her keen sense of humour standing her in good stead. Her narrative describes a transition stage, where certain aspects of European social life existed side by side with the most savage barbarity. It is the incongruous which is so striking. European dances carried out by the courtiers, male

and female, dressed in faultless costumes of Spanish grandees, or in others of like kind, copied from engravings and specially chosen by the Queen; uncouth native sports being executed in the same august presence. The Queen received Frau Pfeiffer several times in audience. Once she was commanded to play on the piano, and another time to perform a solo dance with M. Lambert, who was a young man! The lady was over sixty years of age.

If there was a humorous side, there was also a terrible, for she witnessed what proved to be the last outbreak of persecution of the Christians. The proclamation that a Kabary was to be held called forth what she described in her diary as 'Terror', which caught hold of every one, 'for experience has taught the people that it will lead to new vexations, persecutions, and death. The streets are resounding with cries and howling; every one is fleeing from the town as though an enemy is threatening it.'

At the Kabary, those present were informed that the Queen had discovered to her horror that there were even in Tananarive some thousands of Christians; that, as her severity had not been great enough, she would now employ every means to discover the guilty, while to those who would voluntarily confess she promised their life. Those denounced, however, would suffer terrible torture.

M. Laborde told his guest<sup>1</sup> that this was the most awful Kabary he had witnessed. Thousands once again fled into the forest to perish from exposure and hunger, those caught were tortured.

So deep-rooted and far-spread had Christianity become, that 'many of the nobles and officials were Christians at heart, and they tried by all means to assist their co-religionists to escape'. Thus, in spite of rewards for denunciation, two hundred only were caught.

This lack of success increased the fury of the Queen, who threatened that, unless more and more Christians were denounced within two weeks, she would put the whole nation to the poison test.

If the Viennese lady was living through days of horror on behalf of the people, she had come to realize that her friends

<sup>1</sup> Ida Pfeiffer, *Voyage à Madagascar*, 1881.

Laborde and Lambert were in great danger, and incidentally she also, for she found herself in the very heart of a conspiracy.

When the Prince had learnt from Lambert that Napoleon III would not come to the rescue, he and his trusted band of friends had thereupon decided that, if the Hova were to be saved from extermination, there had to be a *coup d'état* to dethrone the Queen. The conspirators were to enter the palace during the night, the gates being left open. The Queen was to be informed that her people desired a change of government and wished her to abdicate in favour of her son. However, at the last moment, the General-in-Chief failed to carry out his part of the plot, and the gates were not found open. Before a second attempt could be carried out, the Queen heard of the plot, and at once took measures to frustrate any further conspiracies. If her pride had not permitted her to take notice of Mr. Ellis's warning, matters had now become too actual to be ignored. Under the pretext of needing her son's presence, she kept him a virtual prisoner, but he managed, disguised as a slave, to visit his French friends, whose supposed guard of honour had turned into jailers.

He besought Lambert to try once more to win over the Emperor. He handed a letter to his friends in which, after thanking him and Laborde for all they had done for the people of Madagascar, he expressed his bitter disappointment that the Emperor would not, as he put it, 'save us', adding, 'To-day, surely you realize that without that, there is nothing to be done. I declare here in writing what I have said more than once in your presence, that I am ready to renounce all my rights to the throne. I will do so if the Emperor considers it necessary in order to assure a speedy expedition of assistance.

'For goodness' sake, don't draw back. Remember that the destiny of a whole nation lies in your hands. May God help you in your attempt.'

Whether there would be any chance to assist was more than doubtful; for the lives of the Europeans were in danger; and they knew it. In M. Laborde's house were staying also at that time two French priests, although in disguise.<sup>1</sup>

Some time previously M. Lambert had offered to take in his ship one of the Jesuit priests from Baly, where work was

<sup>1</sup> Ida Pfeiffer, *op. cit.*

being carried on, to Tamatave, as a jumping-off place for the capital.

The Père Finaz accepted the invitation and carried out its conditions, namely, to change his name, to wear ordinary clothes, and to leave his breviary behind, as liable to betray his calling. As Lambert's secretary, 'M. Hervier' came, by permission of the Queen, to Tananarive.<sup>1</sup> The Prince, for his part, not only welcomed the priest, but even attended Mass, which was secretly celebrated at Laborde's home on Montasoa.

When the Queen invited a surgeon from Bourbon to come to her capital in order to perform an operation on one of her courtiers, the Prince suggested that another priest should accompany the doctor, as his assistant. The Père Webber came in this manner, and, being himself also skilled in medicine, he was soon held in high esteem. Even the Prime Minister, although a bitter foe of foreigners, came to value him, and the Queen, finding the Frenchman useful, permitted them to remain in Imerina.

At the Kabary at which it was to be decided whether all the foreigners accused of treachery and conspiracy were to be put to the poison test, he tried to have an exception made in the case of the Père Webber. The people, excited, demanded that the foreigners should be killed outright, but this suggestion the Prince Rakotond firmly opposed.

After thirteen days' suspense the prisoners were informed of the decision arrived at. They were told, 'You are accused of having wished to establish a republic, to liberate all slaves, and to establish equality without distinction of nobles. We drive you out of the land over which Ranavalo is ruler. It is not the Queen nor the chiefs, but we, the people, who do it.'

Yet it was the Queen, but she preferred, in this case, to hide herself behind the people, for, when the Prince pleaded with his mother for his friends, she threatened him and his wife with death should he persist.

The order of expulsion for Lambert, Frau Pfeiffer, and the three other Frenchmen was to be carried out within an hour. Laborde was given twenty-four hours to enable him to take his movable possessions with him.

It was quite evident that the Queen had different intentions

<sup>1</sup> 12th July 1857.



for her faithful servant and friend, than for the others. She gave orders that he was to be taken direct to Tamatave, and not to join the party entrusted to a special convoy. Thus Laborde reached Tamatave in three weeks, whence he sailed for the Ile de Bourbon.

The five other Europeans, the Queen wished to perish at the hand of her trusted ally, General Fever. Frau Pfeiffer and Lambert had been down with fever several days before the decree of expulsion was told them.

With her indestructible sense of humour the Viennese lady afterwards described the appalling journey to Tamatave which dragged out to two months; when, more dead than alive, they reached that port.

It must have been galling to the Queen that her plans for killing off the foreigners had not succeeded.

When the workmen of Mantasoa realized that the Queen's director of works had been expelled, they destroyed in a frenzy factories, workshops, and machinery. Though they had loved Jean Laborde, they had groaned under the corvée, without which he could not have carried out the Queen's commands.

One furnace and one gigantic hydraulic wheel were all that was left of that busy centre of manufacture.<sup>1</sup> What the Queen said when informed of this wanton destruction is not recorded.

<sup>1</sup> The author visited Mantasoa, and to this day one is conscious of an atmosphere of rest and culture; of activity and progress—of which these two remains are witnesses. Laborde was buried in Mantasoa and over his grave a large monumental tomb has been erected. To-day Mantasoa serves as a training-place for technical instruction.

## *Chapter VII*

### A DIPLOMATIC DEADLOCK

ON ascending the throne of Imerina, Ranavaloa had of necessity to carry on where Radama had left off—not excluding the sphere of foreign politics. Relations with Bourbon had become exceedingly strained during the last years of his life, owing to a series of insults put on the French flag. Among these incidents was the sale (as a slave) of a shipwrecked sailor, who had asked for shelter; also the prohibition of trading with the French. The accumulation of similar acts, and others of definite aggression, by means of arms, had decided the Council of Ministers to ask the King, Charles X, to agree to the despatch of a fleet from Brazil to Madagascar waters. The forces at the disposal of the Governor of Bourbon having thus been strengthened, an ultimatum had been placed before Radama for immediate redress of these grievances. Although the date had been definitely fixed when a reply was expected, Radama took no notice of it, nor did the Queen. The means for carrying out the threatened sanctions being at hand, and the term set by the ultimatum having expired, Captain Gourbeyre, in charge of a fleet of seven vessels, carried out the orders given him. He bombarded Tamatave, Foulpointe, and Tintingue.

When the news of this bombardment reached Tananarive, panic broke out, and people fled into the country. Rumours spread that the French were marching against the capital. In itself a small expedition, resulting in the destruction of some property, even if satisfying the claims for reparation, it led to nothing but trouble. It roused the fury of the Queen, who increased her army by 23,000 men. It caused endless recriminations, and every attempt by the governors of Bourbon to get a settlement by negotiation failed. The Queen stood on her dignity; she felt she had been insulted by this bombardment, and therefore she wrote to the King of France to demand by whose leave and licence the captain had acted, complaining

at the same time that some of his subjects would not address her as 'Queen of Madagascar'. She did more, she wrote a letter to the King of England to complain of Captain Gourbeyre's attack. Mr. Canning thereupon expressed to the French ambassador H.M.'s Government's displeasure. This aroused the ambassador's ire: he wrote in his report: 'What right has England to object?'<sup>1</sup> What would the British Government say were France to express an adverse opinion, or try to interfere, because that Power was fighting the Ashanti or Burmese?

Whatever Mr. Canning's opinion, one of the missionaries, in a letter to the Government<sup>2</sup> mentioning this military action, expressed his opinion, that it should have been 'either not attempted at all, or more effectually. The French despised the Hovas,' he wrote, 'and underrated their ability; but they got punished for their temerity. Had they humbled this people a little, it would have done them good. Had they made them respect European skill, power, and resources, it would have been of service to humanity. The very reverse has happened, for the Hova look upon the French with contempt, and are elated by their own greatness.

All trade was stopped, nor would the Queen receive any envoys from the French Government to try to settle matters amicably. She felt invincible and independent of foreign traders. As to the possibility of an invasion by the French, of which false rumours reached her, that left her completely cool. 'Let them try,' she said. 'I have an officer in my army, General Tazo;<sup>3</sup> I will leave them in his hands, and I have no doubts of the result.' But no opportunity was given to her terrible officer to carry out his part of her threat.

Indeed, there was no intention on the part of France to make war. The Council of the Admiralty made a report to the King on this expedition:

'That from a political point of view it might have undesirable consequences—by giving the establishments in Madagascar a more far-reaching importance than they had hitherto had, which might modify in that country the respective positions of France and England. However, it

<sup>1</sup> Paris Archives, Quai d'Orsay, 1830. Col. Pol. Madagascar.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Freeman. P.R.O. C.O. 167, 10th April 1852.

<sup>3</sup> Fever.

should be emphasized that Great Britain had never tried to acquire territorial possessions, being satisfied to exercise her more or less powerful influence by presents, and especially by the intermediary of missionaries. England is too powerful in India to be disturbed by our intentions on an island so isolated and so distant from her great possessions in India. However, if we extend our territorial claims too much, she will presume to intervene in the quarrel between us and the natives. All we need is to hold Tintingue as a port.'

The Council advised:

'as the wisest course, at least for the present, to give up all establishments, while at the same time taking the necessary precautions to safeguard the honour of arms; and then to try to conclude peace on the best conditions, assuring those commercial interests, so necessary for our colony of Bourbon.'

The Council urged to 'preserve the rights on Tintingue and other ports,' adding:

'in reality these rights are only those force gives. If we are strong in the Indian Ocean, we shall have sufficient rights; if not, then they are of no use to us.'<sup>1</sup>

In his report<sup>2</sup> on this expedition, Captain Gourbeyre stated what he believed constituted the rights of France in Madagascar; namely, that

'the people of the coast, who had been proud to consider themselves subjects of the King of France, are being at this time oppressed by the Hovas, whose only right is that of conquest. The former affection of the people for us is still alive, and with their heart they desire French dominion. That is the basis of our rights: are they less well founded than those of a nation, which we see threatening to invade all Madagascar?'

Although the Queen claimed to be independent of European trade and commerce, she sent an embassy to London and to Paris, the purpose of which was not very apparent. Mr. Freeman, in a report to the Minister, explained the motive<sup>3</sup> to be fear for the stability of her throne, and the desire to secure an assurance from the British Government that they would not

<sup>1</sup> Conseil d'Amirauté, *Rapport au Roi*. 6th October 1830.

<sup>2</sup> 6th September 1830.

<sup>3</sup> P.R.O. C.O., 20th May 1836.

support a pretender, Prince Ramanateka, her cousin and the lawful heir to the throne of Radama. The Governor of Mauritius, on his part, sent a memorandum to Lord Palmerston to give him an idea of what had happened, and what was still happening in Madagascar. The Queen's policy was stated as being a deliberate attempt to drive out all foreigners, and to lower the prestige of Europe; also, that her aim was to get the whole trade into the hands of her officers, who would make the people labour for them without wages. If this were to happen, then there would be famine. The Governor pointed out that 'the embassy was being sent by the same ruler, who was refusing to accept a British agent. Is England going to support this government or another?'

Did he too think of Ramanateka?

The arrival in London of the six Malagasy ambassadors caused some perplexity to the Foreign Office. 'How were they to be received, being neither princes nor connected with any country having any business with this office?' Perhaps the Colonial Office would take over the care of these gentlemen?

Lord Palmerston admitted to the French Ambassador that he did not see at all what was the purpose of this embassy, 'apparently it was merely to notify that the Queen had succeeded Radama,' he said, adding: 'To my confusion I had to admit that I had not ever heard the gentleman's name before.'<sup>1</sup>

The London Missionary Society came to the rescue by suggesting that Mr. Freeman should act as go-between and interpreter. This missionary assured the noble lord that all the Malagasy wanted was an assurance of British friendship; that it would be advisable to promise it, but on condition that there should be a return to Radama's policy. A British agent should be admitted, and freedom should be granted to all Europeans to live in Madagascar. It would be desirable, also, to secure the promise that prisoners of war should not be killed, and that an indemnity should be paid to the London Missionary Society for its confiscated property.

Lord Palmerston, once he had been primed on the Madagascar question, saw in the Queen's refusal to accept this profitable equivalent formerly given to Radama, a manoeuvre

<sup>1</sup> Arch. Quai d'Orsay. 2nd March 1837.

to get out of the other part of the treaty, namely, not to sell her subjects for exportation. Therefore he used his interview with the envoys to emphasize that part of the bargain. The results of this embassy were nil.

The Queen's reply to Lord Palmerston's letter was a haughty refusal of everything he had asked and suggested. Consuls she considered a sign of distrust; the equivalent she declined, as it would be like buying British friendship and prejudice mutual relations. She also wrote that she would neither protect foreigners nor tolerate Christianity being taught. 'We pray according to our customs, you to yours,' were her words.

A marginal note ran thus: 'The Earl of Aberdeen does not deem it expedient to answer these letters from the Queen of Madagascar.'

The fate of the peoples of Madagascar was no concern of the British Government, which the Queen Ranavalô had told so plainly to 'mind its own business'.

But Mr. Freeman felt differently. In a letter of a later date to Lord Palmerston,<sup>1</sup> he tried to explain that the inhuman policy of the Queen had driven the Sakalava to desperation. He mentioned one instance where 5,000 men of one tribe were massacred, and the women and children divided among the soldiers. 'Justice demands help,' that friend of the Malagasy wrote:

'for these people are suffering in consequence of the policy of Great Britain pursued in Madagascar. The British Government provided Radama with means, in return for stopping the slave trade; these means the Queen is now employing for the destruction of the natives. They feel that England has put these means at the Queen's disposal without any counter-balancing advantages to Madagascar or to Great Britain. The sufferers now ask to be rescued from the fatal consequences of our measures; fatal to them, advantageous to none'.

All the Foreign Office felt able to do, where Madagascar was concerned, was conveyed in a message to the Admiralty that: 'in view of the unfriendly disposition towards England on the part of Madagascar, H.M. Government therefore deems it necessary that increasing vigilance should be used to watch

<sup>1</sup> P.R.O., Pol. Col. F.O. 1st January 1838.

over the proceedings of Madagascar towards British interests, and to afford to British subjects prompt and efficient protection'.

A few years later that first French expedition against Madagascar came to be considered by the Cabinet of Louis Philippe as an 'unfortunate venture'. What Charles X had sanctioned was no longer acceptable to the new sovereign. Madagascar had cost loss of life and of money. Even the Ile de Ste Marie was being considered far too unhealthy. It was therefore decided to try to succeed in striking a bargain with the Queen: namely, to offer her all the parts hitherto claimed in return for the bay of Diego Suarez, in the north of the island. This territory belonged to the Sakalava, those restive and unwilling subjects of the Queen; but in course of time it had become plain to the authorities in Paris that nothing could be achieved in this matter, unless in agreement with her.

This was to prove a vain hope.

In view of a future occupation of that bay, careful exploration had been carried out. The Governor of Mauritius, who heard about this, sent the maps made by Englishmen to Bourbon, to prove England had been first in the field, and to indicate the names given to various places on that occasion.

The question of securing a harbour, 'in case of war', pre-occupied the Governor of Bourbon, Admiral de Hell, and as Diego Suarez was not yet to be had, he directed his activity to the west coast of Madagascar.

The internal policy of the Queen, and the ruthless expeditions against the Sakalava, had forced certain of their chiefs to seek protection from the French, to whom they offered their territories.

Thus the island of Nossi Bé, which two hundred years before might have become a British possession, passed now into the hands of France. So also did the neighbouring islands, and the shore-land from the Bay of Passandave to Cape Vincent.<sup>1</sup> The island of Mayotte was also ceded by its Sakalava chief. Thus, what France had lost to all intents and purposes on the east coast, she was making up on the west coast, by means of those voluntary cessions of territory and of

<sup>1</sup> 1860, twenty years later, the protected territory went farther south, including the Bay of St. Augustine.

sovereignty. This entailed, however, a tremendous responsibility, namely, the protection of the Sakalava against any Hova oppression and aggression.

For the moment, so wrote Mr. Freeman, there seemed to be no immediate anticipation of this danger, 'as the power of the Hova along that coast was almost nominal; except at Majunga, where they have a strong settlement'.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time he sent a statement concerning Madagascar to Lord Aberdeen.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Freeman, fearing lest the British Government might take military measures against the Hovas, begged them

'not to under-estimate the natives, as that might end, as the last attack on Tamatave, in a new triumph for the Hovas, and thus increase their pride and haughtiness in treating with foreigners. The Malagasy are not savages, but have a trained army of 50,000 men, accustomed to the climate, inured to fatigue, and originally instructed in European discipline'.

He mentioned that guns were made in Imerina, and so was gunpowder, by Malagasy trained at Waltham Abbey Powder Mills. Would Lord Aberdeen bear in mind, not to compromise the friendly natives, as their fate would be terrible, for when they had helped the French during their first expedition, one thousand had been killed, and one thousand sold as slaves.

'The only security for the natives would be an occupation with a strong force of English and French troops, as a guarantee for the good faith of the Hovas, till a new treaty was signed.'

One feels the writer's fear of another unsuccessful expedition, when he says, 'H.B.M.'s Government has to do with a crafty, treacherous and powerful foe, and unless sufficient provision is made for the magnitude of the expedition, the attempt will be abortive and the troops be certainly destroyed.'

The only reaction to this memorandum was Mr. Secretary Gladstone's reply that 'he thought' the Government of Mauritius was to look into the matter.

If the Government of Great Britain took no particular interest in Madagascar, an ever-increasing number of the British public

<sup>1</sup> 20th January 1841.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Freeman to Lord Aberdeen, 20th January 1841.



took an interest in the Malagasy and their fate. Christian opinion was shocked at the tales of persecution and suffering which reached the London Missionary Society. In 1839 several Malagasy Christians who had fled to Mauritius visited London, and in consequence of what they related, a special Day of Prayer for Madagascar was observed. That these Malagasy were enabled to plead the cause of their brethren was due to the initiative of an officer in Mauritius, who collected the money for their fares from his brother officers.

Madagascar had thus become known to a large public, but missionary and business possibilities came to be somewhat intermingled. A joint stock company was in formation, and a handbook for colonial settlers<sup>1</sup> was announced. The spirit of Richard Boothby and of the Earl of Arundel, of Charles I, and of the founders of the Assada Company, had come to life again. Once again Madagascar was declared fit to be an English colony. The temporary secretary of this new company stated in his prospectus:

‘According to two missionaries, Madagascar is of more worth to Great Britain, than all her possessions in the West Indies. Land may be purchased at a moderate price. In the hands of a civilized people, Madagascar would command a trade with the four quarters of the globe. In fact Madagascar would be the Great Britain of the Indian Ocean.’<sup>2</sup>

A memorandum concerning this ‘Madagascar Company, a Commercial Steam Navigation Trading and Settlement Company for Madagascar’, was submitted to Lord John Russell. The promoters felt that what was needed was for the British Government to precede the Company by negotiation, treaty and subsidy, and thereby help ‘to organize an establishment around which a British population might rally. Seeing that the Government had interfered with arms in China, then why not by diplomacy in Madagascar? The British Madagascar Company hoped to see a generous act performed on its behalf . . .’

This memorandum was carefully considered by Lord Palmerston, ‘who believed a treaty might be feasible’, but ‘did not

<sup>1</sup> Moorgate Street, 21st June 1851. Arch. Quai d’Orsay, Paris.

<sup>2</sup> Memorial to the Rt. Hon. Lord John Russell, 31st January 1841. Quai d’Orsay, *Projet d’occupation Anglaise*, 21st June 1841.

conceive that such an establishment can be formed without the consent of the governing authorities'. The document was passed on to the Colonial Office.

All negotiations having failed, and military expeditions being ruled out by Paris and London alike, Madagascar lost interest for diplomats. Between the two colonies and Madagascar a state of neither war nor peace existed. Trade, however, was being carried on as heretofore.

The rapid increase since 1815 of England's power and territorial acquisitions in the East brought the question of the necessity for France to have a naval base in the Indian Ocean before the Chamber of Deputies. On 30th March 1843, Nossi Bé, its importance, or lack of importance, according to the different views held, came to be discussed. Opinions were expressed that this island was but a miserable substitute for the Ile de France, that it would be better to construct a port in Bourbon.

The Minister of the Navy declared emphatically that Nossi Bé had a harbour able to contain a considerable fleet, and that expert opinion had declared a port at Bourbon impossible.

M. Guizot, in his reply, after having declared himself at one with the Minister of the Navy, made use of this debate on Nossi Bé to expose his view on the whole Madagascar question. 'I am inclined to believe', he said,<sup>1</sup> 'that in general, to let herself be drawn into prolonged wars with either the natives or with other Powers, or to undertake new great colonial enterprises at great distances from her own territory, does not really correspond to the policy and to the genius of France.' On the other hand, 'what was urgently needed for France, was the possession of good, strong maritime stations to serve as bases for commerce in those parts of the world, which are destined to become great centres of commerce and of navigation. . . . That is where the value of our settlement in Nossi Bé comes in. We have no intention whatever of making it the jumping-off place for Madagascar. . . . So long as I have any influence in the council of the Crown and of my country, I will oppose any attempt to be drawn into the internal wars and affairs of the great island because of those few who have

<sup>1</sup> 30th March 1843.

escaped from there to Nossi Bé.' 'With regard to France upholding her rights in Madagascar,' he said, 'one can uphold rights even if one does not exercise them at the time; they come in useful for bargaining . . .'

The opposition of the Hova Government to the occupation of Nossi Bé manifested itself in a series of more or less unpleasant incidents. The Governor of Bourbon felt that had he been able to have his own way, 'there would have been a more direct and vigorous action', and the tribes would have been protected against the Queen's reign of terror. 'At the same time France would have secured liberty of settlement.'<sup>1</sup>

Other views were held in Paris, as is seen from the statement by the Minister to the officer commanding the fleet in the Madagascar waters: 'that from the political point of view a system of complete neutrality was to be observed in Nossi Bé towards the Hovas, a neutrality combined with goodwill, and of protection of the oppressed population, who had come to seek refuge under the French flag.'

Queen Ranavaloa's xenophobia was an excellent screen for her officials in their brutal acts towards foreigners—the same kind of outrages as had been committed against French subjects fifteen years previously were now inflicted on British subjects, without reproof but rather with praise from the Queen. A naval officer and seven of his men were massacred, an Englishman was to be sold as a slave, etc.

In Mauritius opinion was all for a show of force. The editor of the leading newspaper expressed it when he wrote: 'If such incidents are passed over in silence, we may as well write on the proud flag of England in Mauritius "*Les pauvres Anglais*".'<sup>2</sup>

The Governor sent a letter to the Queen to complain of her officers. Her reply was insolent, but nothing more was done.

Then, almost six years to the day since the Admiralty had advised the British fleet 'to watch over proceedings in Madagascar and to give prompt and effectual protection to British subjects', an event happened which called for the energetic application of that order.

On 13th May 1845 the European traders of Tamatave were cited before the chief judge, who informed them that, by a decree of the Queen, they were to relinquish their nationality

<sup>1</sup> 17th June 1844.

<sup>2</sup> 19th August 1844.

and become Hova subjects. What this meant the startled traders were told in detail: to work in the *corvée*, to undergo trial by poison, to be sold as slaves for debt, to do the labour of slaves, to obey every Hova officer, even down to the last soldier. Trading with the interior would be forbidden, nor would any European be permitted to go outside Tamatave, except when ordered to the *corvée*.

Fifteen days were granted to obey or not to obey this decree; in the latter case their houses and merchandise would be given over to looting, and any one who succeeded in escaping with his life was to embark on the first vessel at that time in the harbour.

Here was a dilemma. Honour, liberty, patriotism in the scale against possessions gained at great privation, and the future jeopardized. A few Creoles of Mauritius, some traders from Manila, one Spaniard and two Frenchmen decided to become 'slaves of the Queen'; the others asked the officials to intercede for them with her, pleading that they had been living so many years, one of them forty, in Madagascar. One and all had done so with the sanction of Radama. Only a few days previously they had been officially praised for their loyalty.

The British naval officer, in the waters outside Tamatave, sent word to Captain Kelly commanding the fleet in these waters.<sup>1</sup> He and Commander Romain-Desfossés, of the French Navy, met a few days later, and after consultation, decided to do their uttermost to prevent this horrible decree from being carried out.

Perfect harmony reigned between the two officers, who in turn argued with the authorities of Tamatave; but all to no purpose. The unfortunate traders were kept all day and every day at the Customs buildings, being bullied and threatened. The naval officers wished to send a letter to the Queen, but that request was not granted; in fact, the officers taking it ashore were not permitted to land.

The sailors, sent to help the unfortunate traders to embark their goods and chattels,<sup>2</sup> were also not permitted to put foot on shore. All hope for a reversion of the cruel order died out

<sup>1</sup> British vessels were patrolling the Canal of Mozambique permanently to prevent slaves from being taken across to Madagascar.

<sup>2</sup> M. Rautoney had 3,000 head of cattle and 16,000 lb. of rice, which had to be left behind.

with the sudden peremptory orders: 'To-morrow you must all be off or you will take your chances of losing your life during the looting.'

However, before the term had elapsed, looting of one of the establishments began, and that under the very cannon of the French man-of-war.

This act sanctioned by the authorities of Tamatave, decided the two commanders to punish the offending officials. The bombardment of the fort being decided upon, 1,300 shots were fired, and then 350 French and British sailors and marines, were landed to storm the fort. Alas! it proved impregnable. After a heroic attempt, during which the Hova flag was three times shot down, and finally taken, retreat became necessary. Covered by the French and British cannon the storming party returned, with most of its wounded and dead. One wounded sailor was captured by the Hovas, first tortured, mutilated, and then had his head cut off, and this, together with the heads of all the other dead, were put on spikes and exposed on the beach of Tamatave.<sup>1</sup>

The next day Captain Kelly wrote a letter to the Queen to protest against 'the insolence and brutal injustice of the Tamatave authorities, which demanded punishment. This act', so the Captain felt, 'would be justified by all civilized Powers, especially as all proposals to arrange amicably the questions of dispute between us have been refused. We have not declared war on the Hovas, we have merely chastised your insolent officers . . .'<sup>2</sup>

He also protested against the exposure of the heads on the beach. The Queen's reply was to the effect that this was Hova custom, and that all the blame lay at the Captain's door. The Hovas had not fired first. She proclaimed far and wide that she had defeated 'the united forces of England and France'.

What Captain Kelly felt concerning this affair becomes evident from his letter to his French 'comrade in arms':

<sup>1</sup> Some time later a young Hova official, who had been educated in Paris and who was holding a fairly important place, passing through Tamatave had the heads taken down and buried. For this act he lost his own head, which was also put on a lance and added to the others, which were exhumed (6th July 1846, *Journal du Havre*). From English sources it appears that this humane act was performed—with the very same consequences to himself—by a new Governor of Tamatave, who had been one of the envoys to England.

<sup>2</sup> 16th June 1845. Arch. Min. Col., Paris.

'I am very keen to know what measures our Governments will take with regard to Madagascar. I am curious to know what they think about this Tamatave affair. In one or two months we may have news via India. Certainly they will agree that we have done what was possible under the circumstances in which we found ourselves, in order to avenge the brutal assaults committed.'<sup>1</sup>

When news of this unfortunate affair reached England, Mr. Freeman, with his intimate knowledge of the Hovas, felt that the moment had come for vigorous intervention by England. He suggested the occupation of Foulpointe, 'a reliable native officer to be put in command. A small force of troops landed on shore, and a warship outside the port, would soon strike a serious blow at the Queen's resources; and a regular blockade of several other points on the coast, would make Hova rule decline.'<sup>2</sup>

If friendship for the Malagasy dictated these measures, patriotism made him fear that England might disapprove of Captain Kelly's action, whilst France might approve that of Commander Romain Desfossés.' 'Would England remain a mere spectator while her neighbour helped herself to a prize?'<sup>3</sup>

Commander Romain Desfossés felt, for his part, that something might well be done in Madagascar. He wrote to the Minister suggesting that it might be advantageous to supply arms and munitions to certain independent chiefs, whose large territories would thereby come under French control.

The Minister wrote on the margin of this letter: 'Nothing of the sort must be done.'<sup>4</sup>

This affair was discussed a year later in the Chamber of Deputies<sup>5</sup> with much heat, which led the Minister of the Navy to quote the orders given to M. Romain Desfossés in June 1844. The Minister added:

'By the instructions given to the Commander, the Chamber sees that under the circumstances in which he found himself before Tamatave on June 15th, he has acted as had been prescribed; by not permitting that, in the presence of the French flag, in face of his cannon, Frenchmen should be robbed of their goods and threatened with death.'

<sup>1</sup> Arch. Min. Col., 25th July 1845.

<sup>2</sup> December 1845.

<sup>3</sup> J. J. Freeman, *A Tour in Africa*, 1851, p. 209.

<sup>4</sup> Arch. Min. Col., Paris, 10th October 1845.

<sup>5</sup> 20th January 1846.

Whatever M. Guizot felt on this matter, he had to yield to the demands of the Chamber. Commander Romain Desfossés received from the Minister a communication marked 'Very confidential' which stated in a few words the exact situation concerning Madagascar; 'That the Chamber and conservative opinion is against any further action: that Lord Aberdeen was not in favour, in fact, he had only agreed to it from the desire for solidarity with France.' Orders to the Commander were: 'You are not to undertake any action against Madagascar, so long as the English do not.'

A few days later, the Chamber passed the resolution<sup>1</sup> 'that France does not abandon any of her rights, but she will not without necessity engage in a distant and onerous expedition'.

M. Guizot's surrender to the wishes of the Chamber caused great satisfaction in England, which found its expression in *The Times*. The writer stated that what England desired was merely to reinstate 'our Resident', adding 'it would be best for France to do likewise and, following Britain's example, not to make any attempts on the independence of Madagascar—by claims of sovereignty'.

The actual result of this attempt to punish Hova insolence was a complete rupture between Madagascar and the colonies of Bourbon and Mauritius, to the detriment of the latter. The Queen closed the coast to all trade, which entailed not only an annual loss of more than £22,000 to the commerce of Mauritius, but caused suffering from lack of oxen and rice.

The decision of M. Guizot, and the ignorance of the Deputies concerning the absolute dependence upon supplies from Madagascar, compelled the citizens of Bourbon to send an appeal<sup>2</sup> to the King. It contained an historical review of all that had happened in Madagascar since its discovery in 1500.

In view of the representations made by the two respective Governments, the Home Governments were ready for joint action, in the way of representations to the Queen. The French commander not being at the time in those waters, Admiral Dacres received orders from Lord Palmerston to negotiate with the Queen, stating that 'the outrages committed in 1845 have justified Her Majesty's Government in having recourse

<sup>1</sup> 5th February 1846.

<sup>2</sup> Au Roi, 24th February 1847. Arch. Min. Col.

to measures of hostility, yet the Government prefers one more effort of peaceable nature. . . .<sup>1</sup>

The attempt failed, for Ranavaloa, although ready to open trade relations, refused all the proposals for an agreement suggested by the Admiral, and in her turn demanded an indemnity of 200,000 dollars 'for the injury caused by Kelly and Romain-Desfosses'. In fact, the rumour spread that she had demanded the surrender of Captain Kelly 'dead or alive'.<sup>1</sup>

The Queen's letter opening 'I Ranavaloa-Manjaka, by the Grace of God, Queen of Madagascar, Defender of the customs of her ancestors', was so haughty and unyielding that it closed all doors to further negotiations.

The Mauritians could not be satisfied with the attitude of aloofness of the home Government, and the suggestion of a reoccupation of Port Loquez was made. That site had been bought under Governor Farquhar, but had been afterwards abandoned, owing to the massacre, mortality, etc.

This scheme found no favour with the Government, nor was Lord Grey<sup>2</sup> willing to accept the suggestion, to make concessions to the Queen, while Lord Palmerston strongly objected to any money being given to her, 'as that would be considered by her as the demanded indemnity. . . . He could not possibly be partner to any scheme which included a fine.'

Four years later, the merchants of Mauritius cut the Gordian knot. Having raised 1,300 dollars among themselves, they sent the money to the Queen, one of their number accompanied by Mr. Cameron, one of the London Missionary Society artisans, who had been formerly in favour with the Queen, and even her partner in an industrial enterprise.

Mr. Cameron presented the sum to the Queen, stating 'that all the people regretted the attack; that he had come to entreat Her Majesty to accept it for the injury done by Captain Kelly'.<sup>3</sup>

The Queen accepted the apology, making it quite plain in her reply that she considered it a fine.

Her demands having been fulfilled and her pride satisfied, she opened the ports to trade and the heads were taken down and buried.

<sup>1</sup> 15th September 1848. Report by Commodore Page to the Secretary of State for the Navy.

<sup>2</sup> 1849.

<sup>3</sup> 23rd October 1853.



Thus ended a struggle which had lasted nigh ten years; years of suffering for the colonies of Bourbon and Mauritius. What M. Poivre had written to the Minister some eighty years previously had come true. 'Madagascar, liable to be closed—means famine for the French islands.'

Since Ranavalô's accession, Prince Ramanateka, Radama's fugitive heir, had been considered by the respective Governors of Bourbon and Mauritius as a pawn in the game of check-mating the Queen. The prince had offered himself, and his hundred faithful followers, to the authorities of Bourbon and had even written several times to the King of France. The potential usefulness of the prince as a means of overthrowing the Queen was fully recognized, if he were supported by the Sakalava and all the malcontents in Imerina. There were, however, so many cons to set against the pros, that nothing definite was done.

Although the French Government did nothing with regard to Madagascar, the Ministers were not permitted to forget that island. Just as a hundred years previously visionaries, as well as men of vision, sent in memoranda, so one sees now the same old points urged:<sup>1</sup> 'Madagascar is the key to the Indian Ocean; Holland has Java, England all she can get in those seas; France has nothing but tiny islands! Madagascar, the richest, most fruitful island. . . . France should imitate England; what was done to Radama I should be done to the Queen's son, once he ascends the throne. Let us recognize him as Sovereign of Madagascar; help him to make all the tribes submit to his rule; we should also give an annual subsidy in munitions and money. Let us get the future king to accept a system of Protectorate, which, while assuring him his full rights in the interior, would give to France the rights of sovereignty for the exterior. Such a combination would satisfy our political, industrial and commercial interests, and would deal in a fair measure with the actual facts.'

Had the fury of Ranavalô I against Christianity spent itself in a last outburst of 1857, or did she find herself unable to destroy it? Whatever the reason, after that she no longer persecuted Christians as such, but continued in her other acts

<sup>1</sup> Arch. Min. Col., Paris, Carton 19, *Memoire sur la question de Madagascar*, 1852. Capitaine de Vaisseau Guillan.

of barbarity, by which she tried to crush and exterminate the people of Madagascar. Unable to live the ordinary life, those who escaped into the forests formed bands of robbers against whom ruthless warfare was waged. So great was the number of robbers caught and executed publicly, that at last this had to be done at night, as the people of Tananarive could no longer bear the sight of all these horrors.

This terrible destruction of life had a painful repercussion in the heart of that very missionary who, thirty years previously, had himself suggested that the British Government might with profit present the Queen with cannon. Bowed with grief, Mr. Freeman now wrote a terrible indictment, born of a feeling of bitter regret and shame, of Sir Robert Farquhar's policy:

'Sir Robert had the sagacity to discern the enterprising qualities of Radama, and formed an alliance with him on behalf of the British Government. The terms of the alliance involved some points of questionable policy; for while Radama engaged to suppress the slave traffic in Madagascar, the British Government engaged to supply him annually with an equivalent consisting in addition to money, arms, military clothing and ammunition. . . .

'Radama was sagacious enough to see his own interest in the offer of the Governor of Mauritius, and found in the equivalent—money and ammunition—the means of equipping a large native army by which he might effectually destroy the independence of the tribes around him and so become, *de facto*, what he always claimed to be, but never actually was, King of Madagascar.

'And this Great Britain, having supplied a handful of men with weapons of destruction and taught them how to wield them more effectually, by sending a few men to drill the natives, lent herself ungraciously to the task of abetting the ruin of the independence, liberty, property, homes and lives of thousands and many tens of thousands of the peaceful inhabitants of the island, who had never raised a finger against the British throne, nor against the Hovas, over whom Radama reigned, but who now, furnished with British weapons, could desolate whole regions of inoffensive agriculturists and glory in schemes of conquest and rapine. . . .'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. J. Freeman and Dr. Johns, *A Narrative of Persecution of the Christians*, p. 6.

Four years after the abortive plot to remove her, Ranavalona sent for Jean Laborde. She could not, after all, keep a grudge against the man who had so loyally served her. Alas, when the exile returned, he came too late to see the Queen, who had just died at the great age of eighty-one years.

A wave of relief and hope passed over the people of Imerina. The reign of terror had come to an end, a reign during which, so it has been calculated, 'one million deaths were due directly and indirectly to wars, barbarous usages, while a hundred thousand were simply slaughtered and more than double that vast number of women and children shared among the troops'.<sup>1</sup>

For a moment it seemed as though the Queen's son was after all not to succeed her on the throne. Another member of the royal family, with undoubted rights of succession had the Queen not given birth to a son, was being put forward as a claimant. But for the prompt action of Prince Rakotond's supporters, there would have been trouble. The rival prince was made prisoner, and asked to withdraw his claim. Yielding to *force majeure*, he agreed to do so, and Prince Rakotond was proclaimed the chosen successor of his mother as sovereign ruler.

<sup>1</sup> J. J. Freeman, *op. cit.*

## *Chapter VIII*

### THE TRAGIC FATE OF RADAMA II

A JUBILANT people hailed the new King, who took the name of Radama II, and who, vested in the sacred royal robe, a crown on his head, appeared on the balcony of the palace.

Deeply moved by the acclamations of joy, Ranavalo's son asked his subjects to put their trust in him, assuring them that his one aim would be to work for their happiness and welfare; he would be their protector, they were to work, to traffic and to prosper.

An era of happiness opened up for a people whose lot had been so terrible. The King at once declared that during his reign no one would be put to death. It was a new thing for a Hova ruler to begin his reign without some members of the royal family being killed, but Radama pardoned his enemies—his rival and his supporters. As to the motive for his unexpected clemency, he explained it in his letter to the Pope<sup>1</sup> as 'having followed the example of Him whose vicar you are'. The King liberated all his mother's captives, restoring to them their lands confiscated by the Queen.

Among those liberated were also three of the Sakalava chiefs made captive by Radama I, and kept prisoner for thirty-three years by his widow. These the King sent home permitting them to take with them the bones of those who had died in captivity. By this act he won the hearts and the allegiance of these chiefs and of their tribes.

He reduced the military *corvée* to one quarter of its time, in order to permit the soldiers to cultivate their lands. He fixed a definite limit to the number of days for the ordinary *corvée*, and himself paid wages to the workmen who were erecting a building for him.

He prohibited the trial by poison.

In order to give his people the possibility of buying and selling at the greatest profit, he abolished both export and

<sup>1</sup> In his letter of 24th September 1862, the King reminds the Pope of this fact.

import duties, and opened his ports and his country to the world. Any traders of any country, so he declared, were to be welcomed.

He proclaimed religious liberty to his people, and freedom for all missionaries to preach and teach their doctrines.

One of his first acts on ascending the throne had been to recall those his mother had banished; and when his friend Lambert arrived, he created him Duke of Imerina. The Pères Finaz and Webber returned to Tananarive openly, as welcomed guests, bringing with them several other priests, thanks to whom regular missionary and educational work was begun.

The King said to one of them that his one desire, his 'one thought, was for the light of truth and of civilization to shine before the eyes of all his subjects'.

He sent official intimation of his accession to the throne to the Governors of Bourbon and of Mauritius. The latter at once sent Colonel Middleton to congratulate the new King. It made a very bad impression in Tananarive that the Governor of Bourbon had not also sent some one, but the latter had not felt free to act without orders from Paris.

When news of the Queen's death reached London, a special meeting was convened by the directors of the London Missionary Society, at which the following resolution was passed:<sup>1</sup> 'That communications be reopened with the Rt. Hon. Earl Russell, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, acquainting him with the favourable sentiments with which the directors have reason to believe the King of Madagascar regards this country and expressing hopes that Her Majesty's Government will use their utmost influence to prevent the establishment of a French Protectorate in that island, should such a project be entertained.'

Four months later Mr. Ellis<sup>2</sup> received a letter from the King signed 'your friend Radama'. It was written 'for the information of Protestants that they were free to come to Madagascar; the King promising protection to all Protestants, whether European or Malagasy, and also undertaking that any one doing them an injury should be punished'.

<sup>1</sup> *Minutes of the L.M.S.*, 14th October 1861. *History of the L.M.S.*, p. 712.

<sup>2</sup> 14th October 1861. *History of the L.M.S.*, p. 712.

On receipt of this letter, it was decided that Mr. Ellis should proceed to Madagascar. The directors of the Society suggested to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that this gentleman might perhaps be authorized to convey a message from Her Majesty's Government to the King of Madagascar. Earl Russell, however, wished to see Mr. Ellis before he discussed this suggestion with the Duke of Newcastle.<sup>1</sup>

The upshot of this interview was 'eminently satisfactory'; allaying all fear of possible French ascendancy. A letter, expressing the sentiments of the British Government upon Radama II's succession to the throne, was entrusted to Mr. Ellis, who felt 'highly satisfied with the views of the Government as explained to him by Mr. Hammond, Under-Secretary of State'.

In April Radama sent M. Lambert to Europe to announce to the Pope and to the Government of France his accession to the throne, and to convey his wishes for friendly relations. M. Lambert was received by the Pope, who became greatly interested in Madagascar.<sup>2</sup>

When Mr. Ellis arrived in Madagascar he was highly flattered by the reception given him, a guard of honour having left the capital to meet him.<sup>3</sup> He looked upon 'his mission as one to examine possibilities and to arrange for it that, as far as possible, Christianity might be most suitably commended to the people and most advantageously established in Madagascar'.

To the sound of bands playing 'God save the Queen', the English missionary entered Tananarive. He was the bearer of a letter of goodwill from Earl Russell to convey to the King of Madagascar the sincere friendship of Her Majesty's Government. Mr. Ellis also delivered a copy of a letter from Queen Victoria. Nevertheless, he did not consider himself, 'as having been entrusted with any political duties, nor as holding an official appointment, but merely as a bearer of diplomatic communications, as a Christian missionary and a friend of the country'.

The Governor of Mauritius thought differently, for he wrote to the Secretary of State 'concerning Mr. Ellis whose long

<sup>1</sup> op. cit. p. 547.

<sup>3</sup> W. Ellis, *Madagascar Revisited*, 1867, p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> 7th April 1862.

knowledge of Madagascar and intimacy with Radama render his co-operation almost indispensable to the solid establishment of British influence in Madagascar'.<sup>1</sup> In the same letter are these ominous words: 'There appears to be a beginning of rivalry and somewhat hostile operations between the Protestant and Roman Catholic bodies.'

This rivalry was to develop at rapid strides, and, in perusing the letters addressed to the Foreign Ministers of both Powers, one finds the name of Mr. Ellis mentioned again and again. According to his own statement to Lord John Russell, it was 'a strong sense of duty which compelled him to act', in a manner which plainly amounted to the denunciation of every action by the French, which seemed to him likely to establish their influence.

Again and again such information reached the Secretary of State, who at once communicated with the French Government, quoting Ellis as the informant.<sup>2</sup> Invariably the reply was the same, 'that nothing was being done contrary to the arrangement reached in 1855 between the two Governments'.

To Radama II, Mr. Ellis was the personification of British influence, but unfortunately he became the supporter of the anti-French faction. At this moment the interests of the reactionary party, and those of Mr. Ellis, coincided. There was also a strong link between the latter and the Foreign Minister, who had been educated in England in days when Napoleon I was the enemy. That this was no longer so, he did not seem to realize; to him France was still a defeated, negligible Power. So also thought the Prime Minister. The strongest feeling in him was, however, antagonism to Radama II's policy, as contrary to that of the late Queen, which had been also his. The chief cause of the Minister's readiness to co-operate at this juncture with Mr. Ellis, was a scheme for developing Madagascar, which would give France an ascendancy undesired by the latter, and open the island to the world; the very negation of Ranavalô I's policy of isolation.

Madagascar's fate hung in the balance. It was around this proposed scheme that everything was to centre, for Radama II realized that the success of this scheme stood for civilization and for the welfare of his people. As far back as 1855, when

<sup>1</sup> P.R.O. C.O., Madagascar. <sup>2</sup> Arch. Quai d'Orsay, Col. Pol. Madagascar.

his attempt to secure the Emperor's military assistance had come to naught, he had made another plan. He granted his friend Lambert a charter for vast concessions which he would ratify once he had ascended the throne. Meanwhile, on the strength of these concessions, this friend and ambassador was to form a company. Lambert's efforts both in Paris and London had failed, owing to the utter lack of security. He therefore appealed to the Emperor for his protection. By this time Prince Rakotond had become Radama II, with whom a treaty of amity could be made, a guarantee for the company. As for the Government, it was possible for it to give its official support only to an already constituted body. Therefore, following the example of Louis XIV, Napoleon III stood sponsor to a chartered company, which would achieve in Madagascar all the great King had failed to do.

On 7th April 1862, M. Lambert notified the Ambassadors in Paris that Madagascar was henceforth open to the commerce of every nation; and that the King had given orders to safeguard life and property of all foreigners within his realm.

The *Compagnie de Madagascar, Foncière, Industrielle et Commerciale* was founded, the Emperor having invited Baron de Richemond, a former senator, to become its first governor. Among the shareholders were leading men in finance, commerce and navigation. The capital was to be 2,500,000 francs, half the sum to be subscribed at once.

What great things Radama expected from this Company becomes evident from his letter to his friend and ambassador: 'I rely on you as though on myself. Dear friend, do all that lies within your power that this Company may begin its activity as soon as possible. This is my most ardent wish, being convinced that this is a short cut to the civilization of my people.'

The charter, which Radama had given, conferred such vast rights, if honourably carried out by both parties, that great things could be expected from it. It conferred on M. Lambert the right (to be transferred by him to the Company) to exploit all the mines (existing and yet to be discovered), forests and lands on the coast and in the interior: to make canals and roads, establish workshops and institutions of public utility, to coin



money with the King's effigy, 'in a word it may do everything that may be considered best for the welfare of the country'. All non-appropriated land to be had for the mere choosing.

The King wrote further: 'This charter has been made in good faith in the presence of God, to further the civilization of our country and at the same time it is to serve as a pledge to our friend J. Lambert and a proof of our gratitude, also to help him to form his Company, which we desire to see constituted as quickly as possible.'

The founders of this new Company were wise men, who realized that Radama's generosity had gone too far. They therefore declined the right to coin money and to organize establishments of public utility 'because the prerogative of sovereignty'. They informed the King of this decision, and asked him to take the new Company, to be called Radama's Company, under his protection. At the same time they offered to let him have one-tenth of the profits—apart from the stipulated 10 per cent of the mine exportations, and 5 per cent of the gains on the agricultural enterprise.

As to the policy to be pursued, there the tragic experiences of the past served as a lesson, and those shoals on which their predecessors of the eighteenth century had made shipwreck, were to be avoided. 'Therefore'—so ran the text<sup>1</sup>—'our enterprise should be essentially pacific and civilizing, in harmony with the spirit and the ideas of our times and to correspond to the noble thought which has initiated this scheme. The system of conquest as sole means for colonizing Madagascar has failed—the hour has struck to substitute for those traditional attempts of political domination, the sole influence of civilization, by means of peace, of commerce and of industry.'

The directors of the new Chartered Company went another step farther, and opened it to other nations, especially to England, 'in order to enable European commerce to have its share in the expected results'.

While all this was happening in Paris, in Tananarive a great tragedy was being secretly staged, while outwardly all was well. Those were halcyon days for the King. To his

<sup>1</sup> *Rapport du Gouverneur au conseil d'Administration sur la fondation de la Compagnie*, July, 1863.

coronation England and France were sending representatives, and existence would have been delightful for Radama II, but for the intrigues carried on around his person.

Kind-hearted, good-natured, but weak, he was anxious to be friends with all. Thus one day he would speak of 'my friend Finaz', and next of 'my friend Ellis'.

To judge from the letters and journal of Mr. Ellis he saw a great deal of the King, who asked his advice on various matters, e.g. concerning the laws of land tenure by foreigners in England; also how far they had to submit to jurisdiction—all very ticklish questions. Mr. Ellis told him that foreigners had to submit to all the laws of civilized countries. Whether Radama understood that distinction was not mentioned, but the King told his councillor that, being anxious to prevent troubles and difficulties, due to the ignorance of foreigners concerning Malagasy laws, he wished to have them printed and promulgated.

In his letter<sup>1</sup> to the London Missionary Society Mr. Ellis mentions these conversations with the King. 'I am occasionally sent for by the King or some high officer,' he wrote, 'and I have for some short time past attended the King daily from one to three o'clock to read English with him. We read together out of a large quarto Bible.'<sup>2</sup>

He was to do even more, for, on the death of the King's secretary, Mr. Ellis was entrusted with the translation of the correspondence with foreign Powers.

The King granted him for the Society he represented 'all the houses and lands occupied at the moment' in order to build houses, hospitals, etc., to become their lands and those of their successors, in accordance with the laws of Madagascar, 'for as long as they lived'.

The greatest influence Mr. Ellis swayed was over the King's favourite, 'Mary', the mother of his only son. This lady, who had been an attendant slave of the late Queen, had superseded in the prince's affection his first wife and cousin, Rabodo, now his Queen. Marriage with the favourite would not have helped matters, as the children retained the status of the mother. Frau Pfeiffer, who had seen a good deal of Mary, was very favourably impressed by her character and intelligence. She had been

<sup>1</sup> 2nd July 1862.

<sup>2</sup> Presented to Radama in 1821.

her royal lover's collaborator in his efforts for saving many of those condemned to death by the Queen.

As concubinage was the custom for Hova royalty, the number of legal wives being as many as twelve, Mr. Ellis saw nothing derogatory<sup>1</sup> in 'Mary's' position. He often visited her house, specially built for her by Radama, and here he even held services. This greatly shocked the recently arrived British Consul, who mentioned this fact in his report<sup>2</sup> 'as not moral, and calculated to outrage the feelings and to give the natives an unfavourable impression of the English generally'.

For the next two months these two ladies, both so intimately connected with the King, became the centres of two factions striving for influence over the King. The latter was a man of weak character—the nominal husband of a woman of strong character, energetic and capable; the lover of a woman whom he really loved and in whose house, amidst his bands of friends, he could let himself go.

What angered the Queen was the fact that Mr. Ellis so openly favoured and upheld her rival. It was therefore not to be wondered at that she took away her adopted son, whom she had entrusted to the English missionary, and that she handed him to the priests for education.

It was this incident which became the starting-point for the open and declared antagonism of Mr. Ellis against the Queen and the French missionaries. A small incident, but fraught with far-reaching consequences.

Three months after Mr. Ellis's arrival,<sup>3</sup> on 23rd September 1862, the King's coronation was solemnized, to which France sent Admiral Pi  re as her representative and England General Johnstone, Commander-in-Chief of the troops in Mauritius. With him came the Bishop of Mauritius, Captain Anson, Chief of the Police, and several tourists.

With the Admiral, who was in command of the naval forces in the waters of East Africa, came the P  re Jou  n, Pr  fet Apostolique de Madagascar, Commandant Dupr  , and Doctor Vinson, who was much in demand by the Hova nobles.

For just a few hours there was some feeling of rivalry between

<sup>1</sup> W. Ellis, *Madagascar Revisited*.

<sup>2</sup> 14th April 1863. Mr. Packenham to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. P.R.O. Madagascar.

<sup>3</sup> 23rd September 1862.

the special envoys over a point of precedence. The General, who considered it his right to sit at the right hand of the King, was annoyed by the Admiral's like claim. Mr. Ellis ventured to point out to General Johnstone that, even if he insisted upon what he considered his right ('which was doubtful') that 'the Government at home would certainly prefer that he should not press his claim and thereby cause a misunderstanding between England and France on a question concerning Madagascar'.

Admiral Pi  re had based his right to precedence on the fact that he had been sent by the Emperor to sign a treaty, while Queen Victoria had sent the General merely to represent her at the coronation, and as bearer of a letter to the King. Profiting by the occasion, both Consuls plainly told the General of their grievances against Mr. Ellis, which the General passed on to him.

That Mr. Ellis was the greatest obstacle to French and Roman Catholic influence, the French Admiral frankly told the English General, and that, but for Mr. Ellis, the priests would have had a flourishing mission.

'The meddling fool,' as Jean Laborde called Mr. Ellis to King and Judges 'who ought to mind his own business', felt, however, perfectly convinced this was exactly what he was doing. Similarly, when he suggested to the King 'that he should have an intelligent Englishman as one of his Ministers to assist him in framing laws, raising revenues, arranging the finances of the kingdom, etc'. One thing is certain, that had this advice been accepted, the tragedy with which the reign of Radama II ended would have been averted.

Between the official representatives of the two great nations perfect harmony and cordiality reigned; and if the special envoys felt a very real regard for each other's sterling qualities, so did also the two consuls. M. Laborde was agreeably impressed by Mr. Packenham's loyal execution of orders from London, 'to be friendly and frank'.

Indeed, the fact of seeing all these important English and Frenchmen on such good terms came as a tremendous surprise to the Court and the nobles. It was generally believed that there was an inveterate animosity between the nationals of the two Powers.

To Laborde the English Consul's personal and official attitude were the joyful promise of a fruitful co-operation for the development of European relations with Madagascar. In his reports to the Foreign Minister, which are really more like personal letters, the warm-hearted, simple-minded ex-armourer of Queen Ranavaloa tells of all that was happening. His letters breathe hope and joy; except when he mentions Mr. Ellis.

Nevertheless, Laborde refused to believe that he was the secret agent of the British Government, which most people assumed him to be. The Frenchman stated that he had heard Mr. Ellis tell the King that he had refused Lord Palmerston's definite invitation to become an agent of the Government. 'Then why', so wrote Laborde, 'does Ellis do nothing else than occupy himself with politics?'<sup>1</sup> Why, indeed? 'From honest conviction as a staunch Protestant and a loyal British subject,' he would certainly have replied. The British Consul, however, was deeply annoyed by what he described in his report to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, as 'Mr. Ellis's forcible Christianity and impolitic and injudicious acts'.

Commandant Dupré,<sup>2</sup> writing about this unfortunate state of affairs, expressed his genuine regret that it was not Dr. Livingstone<sup>3</sup> who was a missionary at Tananarive, as that gentleman had been everywhere known for his tact and gentleness.

The attendance of the envoys at the coronation was of the greatest importance to Radama, who, in his speech from the throne, said: 'I am King by the will of God and by the recognition of the great European states.'

These foreign visitors thoroughly enjoyed their three months' stay in Tananarive, and, on their return, published books to tell of all they had experienced and seen in Madagascar.<sup>4</sup>

The coronation was a magnificent and impressive ceremony, where a happy and loyal people hailed as King the man they loved and whose one aim was their welfare.

It was for this cause that the charter for the Company was now to be signed. The King had, however, to fight for the

<sup>1</sup> Quai d'Orsay, Col. Pol., Madagascar.

<sup>2</sup> Capitaine de Vaisseau Dupré, Rapport du 15 Septembre 1862.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Livingstone was also a missionary of the L.M.S.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Vinson, Commandant Dupré, Le Père Jouën, Captain Anson.

success of his scheme, for all the powers of reaction were set in motion to prevent this act.

Unfortunately, the Prime Minister was dead set against this treaty being signed, and he was still more antagonistic to the charter.

Mary was trying to play the game of Mr. Ellis; the Queen again was in favour of the French and of the treaty.

There had been violent opposition even to the treaty the King was going to make with the Emperor, but Radama II had 'declared it'. By it a new era was to be inaugurated, as Madagascar was to be opened to the commerce of the world.

That treaty provided for those guarantees Europeans required: there was the guarantee of protection, the institution of consular jurisdiction, the inviolability of the dwelling. For the French, especially, there was one clause of greatest importance, namely the right to punish directly any attacks or insults by chiefs. The right to buy land was also conceded.

Napoleon III withdrew the claims of France 'to the sovereignty over Madagascar, but under reserve of our right to the territories ceded, etc'.

The poor distracted King was exasperated. There was a moment when he almost gave in to the forces arrayed against the treaty. Utterly weary, he actually admitted to the Emperor's envoy<sup>1</sup> 'not without some confusion, that Mr. Ellis had in fact made great efforts to prevent the negotiations from becoming effective'. Captain Dupré took his hat, rose from his seat, and said: 'I admit I am beaten by Mr. Ellis, but in my defeat your Majesty will do me the justice to realize that I have done all I could to follow out the Emperor's benevolent intentions, as well as to offer you an honourable, loyal assistance, which I am profoundly sad to see repulsed.'

He concluded by warning the King that the country would be certain to be exploited by adventurers, as no responsible people would venture on investing capital in Madagascar without guarantees of protection.

The distress of his friends, Lambert and Laborde, his own judgment, the fact that he himself had asked for the treaty, and had given the charter, at last decided the King to keep his word.

<sup>1</sup> Rapport du 15 Septembre 1862, op. cit.

The treaty was signed—and so was the charter. Although told by M. Dupré that his Ministers only should sign it, and that he had a year's time to ratify it, Radama signed the charter in bold letters—then, heaving a sigh, said, 'now it will be seen that the sheep has a head of iron'.

Alas, from that moment his head was no longer safe, for—so said those who opposed his policy—'he has sold Madagascar to the French'. Unfortunately, apart from things the King did, events happened which helped to hasten the doom of Radama, a king who was trying to go 'too fast'.

The high hopes set on Radama by his friends and the nation were doomed to disappointment. What had been virtues in the prince became, in certain instances, vices in the King, for he developed all the vices of his virtues. Lambert and Laborde had at once on their return been struck by a distressing moral deterioration. Evidently those years without the restraining influence of his fatherly friend had been bad for a weak character. Then, suddenly, had come his elevation to the throne. The Père Jouën was painfully impressed by what he saw in the amiable, friendly King, of whom he had heard such high praises. 'Radama is despising the Royal dignity and detests all the work of a king. He displays a despairing carelessness and a deep repulsion for all business and all occupation.'<sup>1</sup>

The King gave himself frequently over to debauch, leaving his friends to do what they liked. 'Almost all government was in abeyance; and by the abolition of all customs dues, no revenue was coming in.'<sup>2</sup>

Instead of having experienced men as his advisers, he listened only to his band of friends, the Mena-maso, who, now that their former occupation had gone, began to abuse their power. Formerly loved as the protectors of the people against the Queen, they now came to be hated for their lawless acts.

These 'Red Eyes'—for that is the meaning of their title—were supposed to investigate and search out everything tending to injure the Government, and to give the King confidential information. The strain of this work was supposed to make their eyes red.<sup>3</sup>

Radama's neglect of his duties of rulership and the

<sup>1</sup> Le Père Jouën, *Relation d'un Voyage à Tananarive*.

<sup>2</sup> W. Ellis, *Madagascar Revisited*.

<sup>3</sup> W. Ellis, *op. cit.*

corresponding misrule of the Mena-maso were beginning to exasperate the population. However, the memory of his goodness during the years of terror permitted hopes for better days to continue. Every one who had loved Prince Rakotond expected that, now that he was King, he would pull himself together, restrain his friends, and rule his subjects in equity.

This might possibly have come about, had it not been for the sudden outbreak of one of those mysterious epidemics,<sup>1</sup> in which mass-psychosis carries the contagion over a wide area.

Six months after the King's coronation news reached the capital that in the south-west of the country a strange sickness had broken out. Those afflicted were compelled by some occult power to dance and dance, till, utterly exhausted, they would drop down.

At the least sound of any rhythmical sound the dancing-frenzy got hold of them. Anything and everything, if but the clapping of hands, was clamoured for by those who believed themselves possessed by the spirits of the departed. Bands of these dancers, accompanied by friends to make music or to clap their hands, proceeded towards the capital; their numbers being all the time swelled by new victims.

News spread that the spirit of Ranavaloa had left the realm of the departed, to bring her son to reason in order to compel him to follow in her ways and those of his ancestors, instead of following in the steps of Radama I. The persons afflicted by the dancing-frenzy were those whom the dead Queen was forcing to carry loads for her as they had done during her life.

To a people as superstitious as were Radama II's subjects the news of the dead Queen coming to Tananarive created an extraordinary atmosphere. The diviners acted masters of the ceremony, marshalling the groups of dancers into the capital. On 26th March, so it was rumoured, the spirit of the old Queen entered Tananarive,<sup>2</sup> where the epidemic broke out in full force.

It was here that the dancers began to attack the people; first by hitting them with sugar canes they had stolen from a plantation, then with banana stems. No one dared to protect

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Caseneuve, *La Choreomanie de Madagascar. Journal officiel de Madagascar*. No. 831, 1903.

<sup>2</sup> Père de Malzac, *Histoire de Madagascar d'après le memorial du Père Finaz*.



his property against these thieves, as they considered them to be the escort of the dead Queen.

Violence and theft increased, and Tananarive became a city in which madness had been let loose. Pandemonium reigned. The few Europeans watched the growing anarchy with apprehension, and so also the deepening effect of this movement on the mind of the King. Radama told Mr. Ellis, that 'the spirits of his ancestors were coming from the north in most formidable array, even with muskets and cannon'. 'Where did they get them from?' asked Mr. Ellis. 'I should not think that there are any of these things in the other world.' The King laughed and changed the subject.

Soon after the outbreak of this epidemic, Jean Laborde wrote to the Minister of Foreign Affairs a letter which shed some light on what was going on at this time behind the scenes.<sup>1</sup>

'SIR,

'I have the honour to inform your Excellency that King Radama has promulgated a law to put a stop to the discussions which have taken place between the priests of the idols and the Christians. It occurred under the following circumstances. For some days past, a malady has broken out, which produces a kind of hallucination. Under pretext of this malady the idol priests, it is said, instigated by persons high in rank, have attempted to recover the power they formerly enjoyed, and thus to reinstate things of the former régime. In consequence many were feigning sickness, and, instigated to do so by the priests, presented themselves before the King, declaring that they were sent from the old Queen, whom they pretended to have seen during their hallucinations. They boldly demanded the expulsion of the Christians. As a result there is now a popular excitement, which can easily become alarming.

'Everybody is impatiently waiting for the solution of this question by the King. On the 25th of April His Majesty proclaimed that any provocations given by the idol priests to the Christians, or by the Christians to the idol priests, would be severely punished.

<sup>1</sup> Letter from J. Laborde, Antananarive, 28th April 1863, to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, announcing the royal promulgation. Quai d'Orsay, 16th May 1863.

'I hope his proclamation will have a good effect. But should the matter not stop there, I will take care to send the information to your Excellency.

J. LABORDE'

If the French Consul was right in assuming political influence to be behind this movement, Mr. Ellis, for his part, put it down to the growing antagonism of the nobles to concessions granted by the King to M. Lambert.

Radama's pride was flattered that his ancestors were taking such an active interest in his doings. To him the whole thing was real, while to the Europeans it was evident that the idol-keepers were fostering the movement in order to regain their former influence.

Those afflicted came to be regarded as privileged persons, and the King gave orders for every one to raise their hat to the sick. He himself bared his head.<sup>1</sup> The missionaries refused to do so.<sup>2</sup>

The contagion spread to the Army.<sup>3</sup> During parade the soldiers flung down their arms, their bodies began to twitch in strange contortions; they began to beat their officers, even the general.

Laborde's hopes were thus not to be fulfilled, for a variety of incidents occurred which intensified the already overcharged atmosphere.

The ever-growing influence of the diviners and of the Meno-maso, who also were anti-Christian, made the King change his attitude towards the Christians. What made matters worse was the intention of Mary to be baptized. Infuriated, the King struck her, threatening to put her to death; but she remained firm, 'expressing her willingness to die, rather than to lose her soul'.<sup>4</sup>

The King's anger played into the hands of the anti-Christian party, which now proposed a general massacre of Christians. Owing to his treaty with England Radama could not sanction it; but a roundabout way was discovered for achieving the desired end. The King was going to promulgate a law making

<sup>1</sup> Père Jouën, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Rev. W. Ellis, 16th May 1863. Letter to the Directors of the L.M.S., received in London 6th July.

<sup>3</sup> Père Finaz.

<sup>4</sup> W. Ellis, *op. cit.*

it lawful 'for any one wishing to attack with fire-arms, sword or spear to do so, and that even if they killed people, they would not be punished'.

At a meeting of his advisers, the King repeated his intention to enforce this decree. Three of those present had the courage to oppose him; some approved of it; but the majority kept silent. Hereby they signed their own death warrant.

While this was happening within the palace, deliberations were carried on by the nobles and chiefs as to what best to do to prevent this order from being put into force. Finally, the Prime Minister and the General-in-Chief, with one hundred others, went to see the King to remonstrate against what they considered the legalization of murder. Although the Prime Minister went down on his knees before the King in supplication, Radama remained obdurate.

Mr. Ellis, who spent most of those fateful days with the King, witnessed this pathetic scene. He heard the King's 'Yes' to the Prime Minister's point-blank question, 'You will leave unpunished any one who kills another?'

'Then we must arm,' the Minister said, and sadly the long procession of grave and silent men left the Palace.

The hour had struck to deliver Imerina from the folly of a king, who prided himself on not shedding human blood, but who had now given leave and licence to all others to do so!

An atmosphere of excitement prevailed in the capital. While many people left it, other crowds were coming in from the country. The King, perceiving the city full of soldiers asked: 'Why all these troops?' He was told: 'Because business is being carried on which does not concern Your Majesty, but only the people.'

The first thing to be done was to get hold of the King's mischievous companions and advisers, but he refused to hand them over, when requested to do so. He did so seven times.<sup>1</sup>

Then a man-hunt began! Some escaped, others were caught and killed; the remaining few found shelter in the King's palace.

Requested by the nobles to surrender 'those criminals' the King refused. Threatened, Radama tried to compromise.

<sup>1</sup> J. Laborde. Report to the Foreign Minister.

He offered to remove them from their positions, and to put the leading chiefs into their places and to let them govern.

'No—hand us the men to deal with them as we think fit,' was the inexorable demand.

The King was in a sore plight, but he still held out. Always more troops were gathering in the city. The few soldiers on guard in the palace, although pitying the King, did not defend him. They refused to fire on the people.

Radama realized at last that he had no chance to save his friends; that he had to hand them over to the infuriated populace. He did so on condition that their lives should be spared, but they might be kept for life in irons.

After surrendering his followers to the leaders of the rebellion against his person, Radama found himself forsaken by all but his Queen, Rabodo, who had been doing her utmost during these fateful days to make him yield to reason.

The King and Queen were alone in his bedroom, when a fate like that of the Emperor Paul I of Russia befell the King of Madagascar. The Emperor was strangled with the cord of his dressing-gown; Radama II with his silken robe; but in this case there was no choice given to the King—no demand to abdicate. The few soldiers sent to kill him told him point-blank for what purpose they had come, 'because he was not worthy to be on the throne'.

The last words of the son of the bloody Queen were, 'I have never shed human blood.'

## *Chapter IX*

### QUEENS AND PRIME MINISTERS

EARLY in the morning an ultimatum was placed before Rabodo by the leaders of the nobles. 'Accept our conditions,' they said, 'and you will be Queen. If you refuse, another one will be chosen. But bear in mind that, if you do not carry out faithfully every clause, a fate like that of your husband will overtake you.'

Only some hours previously, when trying to shield her husband, Rabodo had felt the point of a sword against her breast. Cowed by the terror of the last days, Radama II's widow read the document presented to her. It contained the text of a new constitution, by which the Queen was to be merely a figurehead, the real power to be vested in the Prime Minister and a Council of thirty.

She signed the fateful document.

Shortly after, the two Consuls, Packenham and Laborde, received the curt intimation: 'The guilty are dead. Rabodo is Queen of Madagascar.'

A proclamation informed the nation that 'the King, grief-stricken at the loss of his friends, has taken his own life. Rasoharina<sup>1</sup> is Queen of Madagascar.' At the Kabary awe and sorrow reigned. It was a sad and subdued people to whom the changes in the constitution were explained. Henceforth the sovereign was to be no longer the law-giver; laws would be passed by her in conjunction with the heads of the nobles and of the people. Unlike the former Hova rulers Rasoharina was not sovereign by right of inheritance, of bequest or of conquest, but by the choice of the people. The first paragraph of the constitution stipulated that 'the Queen shall not drink any alcoholic liquor'; the second: 'The right over life and death belongs to the Council, at which the Queen presides. The death sentence can be passed by the Council for great crimes only, and that after a trial by jury.' Customs duties of ten per

<sup>1</sup> The name under which she was proclaimed queen.

cent on imports and exports were reintroduced. On the other hand, the abolition of trial by poison was maintained, and religious liberty was affirmed, but with the new proviso 'equality of rights for the idolators as for the Christians'. Christianity might be taught everywhere, with the one exception of the village where Ravanalo I lay buried.

With a sinking heart Jean Laborde read the short letter from the Prime Minister. 'As you know, the ruler has changed. We are quite ready to make a treaty, but, the Sovereign being changed, we desire to change also the treaty lately made.' Laborde was asked to pass the message on to his Government.

A few days later, Queen and Council repudiated the treaty and charter, the latter on the pretext that Radama had signed it without the knowledge of his Ministers. Considering it had been done at the same time as the treaty, countersigned by the Ministers, and witnessed by the British and French Consuls, this was the flimsiest pretext possible.

This unilateral denunciation of the treaty was to have far-reaching consequences.

The two Consuls were received in audience by the Queen, who expressed the wish to entertain good relations with the foreigners. Contradictory though this may appear in view of the foregoing fact, it was nevertheless the genuine expression of her personal feelings, as she was to prove repeatedly during her reign.

In France a party of engineers was meanwhile embarking for Madagascar, taking with them all the machinery, tools, instruments required to carry out the work entrusted them by the Company. M. Dupré sailed from Marseilles, the bearer of the treaty entrusted him by Radama II, now countersigned by Napoleon III. Little did M. Dupré guess that on his day of sailing this treaty had become a mere 'scrap of paper'.

Not till he reached Bourbon did he learn of the King's tragic end and of the repudiation of the treaty and charter. M. Laborde wrote to him: 'In my opinion the charter depends on the acceptance of the treaty. If that is not upheld, neither is the charter.' Under the circumstances M. Dupré deemed it wisest for the majority of the engineers and the precious machinery to remain for the present in Bourbon. M. Lambert

and four of the experts only were to proceed to Madagascar and begin work, as though the charter was still valid. It was not for him to accept as a *fait accompli* what the Hova rulers had decided, before the Emperor had had his say in the matter.

M. Dupré proceeded to Tamatave, where, by order of the Prime Minister, the chief official informed him that 'the reign of Radama has been wiped out of history so as to annul everything done by him'; that, however, the Hova Government wished M. Dupré 'to accept seven articles, herewith presented, as basis for a new treaty, and to proceed to Tananarive to sign it'.

'And you really believe that France will accept such proposals!' the Emperor's envoy retorted. Sadly the officer replied: 'I have told them that you will not accept their proposal, but they would not believe me!'

M. Dupré made it quite clear that the Emperor's signature was not 'a vain word to make sport of'; he therefore refused to proceed to the capital before he had been assured that the treaty, signed by Radama II and by Napoleon III, would be loyally carried out.

M. Laborde was urged to try to get this assurance, but should he fail, then to take down the flag and to come to Tamatave.

Little did M. Dupré realize with whom he had to deal and what occult powers were to oppose him. That M. Laborde failed in his attempts was due to the fact that the Queen's wishes were not taken into consideration by the Prime Minister. The latter's personal opposition to this measure had been encouraged by an assurance, given him by Mr. Ellis in M. Laborde's presence that 'if France was to send an expedition to enforce the Treaty, England would provide the Hova Government with means to repulse it'.

It was evident that among the Hova it was firmly believed that France could do nothing without the permission of England. Unfortunately, immediate events were to lend some appearance of truth to this fallacy. M. Dupré, not having any powers to act till he had received orders from Paris, could do nothing apart from protesting, and breaking off official relations with the Hova Government by recalling the consul.

This he did, but M. Laborde soon after returned to Tananarive in a private capacity.

M. Dupré was chafing under enforced inactivity—for letters took four months to reach Paris. Immediate action was the remedy for this desperate case; so he believed, and in his conviction he was confirmed by Laborde, who received several letters from three of the Ministers, written secretly in fear and trembling, lest they should be discovered.

These letters make exceedingly interesting reading; they portray the situation by their statements. 'The Queen weeps at this decision'; 'the Queen is like one broken'; 'Invite M. Dupré to show the force of France. The insult offered the representative of a great Power is too flagrant.' 'If one does not chastise this weak Government its pride will be without bounds.' 'Don't let M. Dupré give in to a procedure dictated by sheer savagery.' 'It is said here that you are subjects and slaves of Ellis and of the English—you and M. Dupré and the French.'

Laborde sent the originals with a translation to the Foreign Minister in Paris.

Relying on the Queen's friendship, with which she had honoured him during those three months he had stayed at Tananarive, M. Dupré now wrote to her a personal letter. As she had asked him to call her by her name, he began his letter with 'My dear Rabodo'. It was, therefore, with pain that he received a purely official reply from the Queen, who refused all his demands. What balm therefore to his sore heart, when he received, through M. Laborde, a private message from his royal friend that she 'being helpless and the English party powerful, France must show force'.

Alas! Months passed and no orders came to that effect. By sheer force of circumstances the acute stage passed into the chronic. In vain did the Minister of Police write to Laborde. 'Unless you give a sound lesson you will be completely lost here, because there is great trust in the English. Do let the people and Prime Minister realize that their hopes are misplaced. Once they see that the British have not come to their assistance, and they have been well chastised by you, you will be able to make what treaty you like.'

How galling for the French officer to admit that he had neither power to alter a treaty signed by the Emperor, nor to draw France into war!



Napoleon III had other preoccupations, and his desire to please England (as it was believed) influenced his non-committal attitude.

M. Lambert received meanwhile an offer of £1,000,000 from England for his charter. This he refused, as to accept it would be tantamount to an act of betrayal of the shareholders of the Company, who, for their part, were wondering what steps the Emperor would take to enforce his rights. Unwilling to uphold these by means of arms, Napoleon III suggested as a compromise that an indemnity of 1,200,000 francs be demanded, 300,000 francs to go to M. Lambert, 900,000 francs to the Company to cover expenses incurred in machinery, personnel, etc.

Thus once again Madagascar proved itself an island of unfulfilled expectations. M. Dupré wrote to the governors of the Company: 'All my efforts have broken down against a fictitious obstacle, which would have crumbled to dust at the first display of force by France.' The Governor of Bourbon wrote in dismay, 'What of our hopes!'

Two years previous to these happenings a renowned naturalist,<sup>1</sup> after a visit to Madagascar, had written: 'What a tissue of lies has been woven about this island. This Hova Power—what a chimera! What a phantom!'

And yet this chimera won the day!

It is a long, tedious story of bargaining and haggling on the part of the Hova Government, which won the victory, in so far that the treaty remained a dead letter and that the charter was torn up. Napoleon III personally corresponded with the Queen on this matter but what could she, the helpless slave of the Prime Minister, do? Her situation was truly pitiful. Having shared the late King's hopes and ideas, she fully realized that this charter was for its best interests. She knew that it did not constitute a right of sovereignty for France over Madagascar, and that the country had everything to gain by the industrial and commercial development which would follow as the result of the charter. At least she wanted to play fair to the shareholders and urged paying the full indemnity, offering to pay half herself. But she had two parties against her; the one insisting on refusing it completely, the

<sup>1</sup> M. Lecailler.

other on paying only in part. For once she had in Mr. Ellis an ally in the matter of payment, for he urged it to be made, but as a means of killing French influence by one stroke. On Mr. Ellis's advice an embassy was sent to England to ask the Government's good services.

The Queen and her friends deeply resented the statement made in the letter to the British Government, that Radama had signed the charter after having been made drunk. However, all her remonstrances were overruled by the Prime Minister. The result of the visit to London was nil; the envoys merely being advised to accede to the Emperor's justified demands, and told that England would not jeopardize her alliance with France because of them.

Paris matters did not advance either, for the envoys professed not to have any mandate, and therefore could not agree to the sum demanded.

That Napoleon III did not receive them was a slight they tried to hide; for on their return to Tananarive they explained it as being due to his jealousy, 'because they had gone to England before coming to Paris'.

The Queen and her party at last won the day. 1,000 kilograms of silver dollars were carried to Tamatave under the convoy of 1,500 soldiers. But before the indemnity was delivered, the original copy of the charter had to be handed over, in order to be burnt.

The hungry flames which consumed the documents bearing Radama's signature destroyed at the same time the best chances Madagascar had ever had for a speedy spread of civilization and for the development of its natural treasures.

Once the charter had been burnt, glee reigned amongst the anti-European party, for, so it was said, 'Now that the money has been paid over no white man can lay claim to even a finger's breadth of Madagascar soil.'

The Prime Minister's reign was to come to an unexpected and sudden end. His enormous riches, the number of his slaves, the fear lest he might usurp the throne, led to a conspiracy. His brutality to the Queen and his cruelty led to his downfall. It had found vent in the ruthless persecution of the late King's partisans, who, for more than a year, had fostered the rumour that Radama II was alive and in hiding. Mr.

Ellis, as well as Laborde, believed this to be true, and every one was expecting Radama to appear at the head of an army to claim his own.

The Prime Minister, trembling for his own safety, used every means to dispel this rumour, and finally, offered a fabulous sum to any one who would bring the King's head. At the same time a war of extermination was made on the King's partisans, seven thousand of whom were killed.

Accused of treason, and of causing harm to the welfare of the State, the Prime Minister was condemned to death. This sentence was, however, commuted to one of life-long exile to a small village. There, accompanied by thirty-two slaves, he had to live, a prisoner; for the soldiers sent to guard him were to pay with their lives should he escape. Truly one might exclaim: 'How are the mighty fallen!'

Some time later he was assassinated.

At once after the Prime Minister's downfall, his brother, the Foreign Minister, stepped into his place. In every way a different character, believed to be just and humane, with an open mind, inclined to progress and new ideas, the new Prime Minister—Rainilaiarivoly—entered upon a career which was to lead him to the very pinnacle of power.

Rasoherina, a gentle and amiable woman, in spite of her natural capacities, became merely a puppet in the hands of her Prime Minister, who was also her lover.<sup>1</sup>

It was not quite as soon as he would have desired that he became all powerful, but among his own relations he had many enemies. He had therefore to try to find support where best he could, even from the English missionaries. The Queen, for her part, was favouring the French and Roman Catholics. She was quite friendly towards Christianity, yet seemed to find a certain satisfaction in putting small spokes into the wheels of the missionaries' cart. Markets were to be held on Sundays, and although Christians were not compelled to work on those days, they were expected to attend ceremonies and to take part in dances.

Thanks to the religious liberty, Christianity spread, and several other Protestant societies began work in Madagascar.

<sup>1</sup> According to his own statement made to his Intendant Vassé in 1895. *Journal de Mon Intendance*.

A healthy desire for emulation is evident at this time, a desire to learn from each other. Thus, for instance, Mr. Ellis, realizing the attraction the classes of ornamental embroidery had for the Malagasy girls, and how excellent the educational work of the Roman Catholics was, asked for more teachers to be sent out.

M. Laborde again urged his Government to send out a doctor, as Dr. Davidson's activity was such a blessing for the people. The Mission Hospital was always full to overflowing; the consultations being daily attended by hundreds of patients.

In the question of finances there was one fundamental difference between the French and the English missionaries. The former were living poorly on the grant given by the Propaganda Fidei in Rome, and an occasional sum sent from Paris by the Ministry of Education. There was one large sum of 90,000 francs, a personal gift from the Empress Eugenie, whom her spiritual director had interested in the work in Madagascar by request of the Père Jouën.

The English missionaries, on the other hand, received fixed salaries which, together with the funds required for carrying on the work were supplied by the London Missionary Society, with its thousands of supporters. The Madagascar Mission had acquired great interest to large numbers of English people.

Rasoherina's rule was, from a political point of view, uneventful, with just the exception of a treaty of peace and commerce with England, which was signed in 1864,<sup>1</sup> by which a fairly satisfactory basis for trade and commerce, for protection of goods and persons had been reached. Two years later a like treaty was signed with the United States.

In 1868 the French Government had deemed it advisable to follow the example of England and the United States by making a treaty in its turn with the Queen. The commissioner of the Emperor died before he could achieve his mission; it was whispered—from poison. His successor, M. Garnier, arrived at an unpropitious moment, as the Queen had just left the capital for Andovaranta, in search of health. It was a return to the days of Ranavaloa I, for forty thousand people,

<sup>1</sup> Ratified in 1865.

so it was said, accompanied Rasoherina on this journey, of whom thirty thousand only returned with the dying Queen.

The only European to do so was Laborde, who accompanied her as her medical attendant, as he was an expert in treating the diseases of the country. He had, however, to contend against the sorcerers, who wanted to cure the Queen by their wizardry.

At last the Prime Minister agreed to Dr. Davidson being called in. Meanwhile, the Queen was kept in her palace, a virtual prisoner of the Prime Minister; members of her family and a few of his relations only being permitted to visit her.

Laborde reporting on this fact, added: 'because the arbiters of power are hiding the fact of the Queen's approaching death till they have decided whom to choose as her successor'.

It was said by an eyewitness that 'the Queen was nothing else but a fetish, around which the various parties were struggling for power'. If this had been true during the preceding years, how much more now? There was the defender of 'national customs', a fierce old chief of eighty-two years of age, the inveterate foe of innovations, hating the white men, the spokesman of the idol-priests. He wanted as Queen that royal lady who would be most certain to return to the old ways. Then there was the Old Hova party, which had on its programme antagonism to France. The Prime Minister sought support from it. Laborde described him as 'a man without pronounced tendencies either for good or evil—haughty and therefore very sensitive'; and gave as his chief characteristics vanity, great ambition, and very little resolution.

Then there was a party headed by the Secretary of State, the Prime Minister's cousin, a man of superior intelligence and natural gifts, who under insinuating manners was hiding dissimulation, great duplicity, cupidity, and impatience.

Every one wondered which of these three men would sway authority during the reign of the to-be-elected Queen.

On 2nd April 1868, the people were informed that Rasoherina had 'turned her back', and that by her desire her cousin Ramona was to succeed her as Ranavaloa II. The Prime Minister had won the game.

By the late Queen's express wish, the beautiful dress the

Empress Eugenie had sent her on the occasion of Radama II's coronation served as pall.

Ranavaloa II's coronation seemed to herald the dawn of a new era. The idols shone by their absence, while large illuminated texts were displayed on the royal platform: 'Glory to God in the highest', 'Goodwill towards men', etc., etc. On a table before the Queen lay a large Bible and a copy of the Malagasy laws.

The address from the throne contained among many excellent things, one symptomatic sentence. It ran thus: 'Should any one covet this land, be it but as much as a corn of rye, I will not consent to it.'

It makes good reading in M. Garnier's report that for once there was joint action by the British and the French in the matter of pleading for the commutation of the death sentence pronounced against certain conspirators. 'This unity of sentiment', he wrote, 'had a salutary effect.'

What pleased the French envoy was to perceive the decisive influence certain photographs of the Paris Exhibition of 1867 had on Hova legislators, especially those of buildings. A decree was issued, permitting dwelling to be built of fire-proof materials, thatched roofs being henceforth prohibited.

Three months after the coronation, a treaty with France was signed, a replica, with a few minor alterations, of that with England. Paragraph IV permitted the acquisition of land 'in conformity with the laws of the country'. M. Garnier had to agree to many a compromise, but it was not possible to consult his Government.

In her letter to Napoleon III, Ranavaloa II styled herself, 'Queen by the grace of God and the nation's will. Protectress of the laws of the country' (*sic*, no longer of its 'customs').

'The Queen has expressed strong feeling in favour of Christianity,' so wrote a correspondent.<sup>1</sup> 'She has also rejected entirely the customary consultation of idols, and hears the gospel preached regularly within the palace by some young native Christian. The Prime Minister has also expressed a determination to embrace Christianity and lends his influence in this direction. As a consequence, there appears a strong probability of the Hovas, almost in a body, turning into nominal

<sup>1</sup> *The Friend*, 4th May 1868.

Christians. All the churches, in both city and country, are crowded to overflowing. The vast majority of these people are those who have hitherto kept themselves aloof from Christianity.'

To be a Christian became the fashion from the day the Queen and Prime Minister were baptized.<sup>1</sup> The leading English missionary reported having a class of a hundred catechumens;<sup>2</sup> ministers, officials, sorcerers, etc., etc. Protestantism became the State religion.

Two days after the royal baptism, the Prime Minister, having repudiated his wife, married the Queen.

The idol priests made one last desperate, but vain, effort to stem the rising tide of Christianity. They sent the Queen a message as from the idols, bidding her to return to their worship lest 'they might have to administer to her a medicine which kills'.

This threat was the undoing of the idols. Soldiers were sent to destroy all their houses and to burn them. Kelemalazo, that chief national fetish, was burnt with solemn ceremonial. The terrified populace followed suit in burning fetishes and charms. Soon after they said, 'You have taken our gods from us; now teach us whom to worship.'

A doctor just then on a visit to Imerina, found it most interesting to watch what he described as 'the conversion from to-day to to-morrow of millions of pagans'. With what results can be imagined. Mr. Freeman, in later years, looking back upon this movement, frankly expressed his regret. He wrote: 'The connexion of the Malagasy mission with the native Government, has proved one of the greatest impediments to its success, by inducing the belief in many native minds that it was merely a means of further oppression in the hands of a Government already too oppressive. "Neither help us nor hinder us," is the cry of the missionary to all secular authorities; "let us alone." The more simple, the more spiritual the aim of the mission, the less the secular powers interfere, the greater and the purer the results.'<sup>3</sup>

However, not all the missionaries felt at the moment the drawbacks of State support. Within a year there were 165,000 people attending worship in 621 churches. 'The number of

<sup>1</sup> 19th February 1869.

<sup>2</sup> The Rev. Cousins.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. Freeman and Dr. Johns, op. cit. p. 297.

Christians rose from 16,000 to 37,000. As to the teachers; these were more State officials than apostles', the result being what has been described as 'an exterior and very superficial protestantization of Malagasy society'.<sup>1</sup>

A 'Church of the Palace' was formed, under whose auspices this process was being carried on. If henceforth all was to be plain sailing for the Protestant mission, not so for the Roman Catholic, which had to contend with a strong under-current of opposition; the chief cause for this was primarily the fact of its being French. This did not apply, however, to their converts, yet they too were perpetually harassed and interfered with. Although by the treaty, full religious liberty had been granted to French Roman Catholics, there was no honest intention on the part of the rulers to honour this clause. One of the chief means to cramp the influence of the Roman Catholics was a law which made it illegal for any child, once inscribed in the list of a school, to leave it for another, 'unless for special reasons'. Lists of 'inscribed' pupils had to be sent to the Government. Human nature being what it is, the State school teachers, anxious to prove their zeal, sent in lists, often of such inaccuracy that the priests contested them, but always in vain. In one village, all the children having been inscribed as attending the State school, those who were Roman Catholics could no longer go to church with their parents!<sup>2</sup>

No wonder that bitterness was rife, and that the rivalry, formerly limited to certain European representatives of their church, now spread its roots everywhere. The seeds of an obnoxious weed were thus widely sown in the schools.

The Emperor's commissioner watched events with great interest, especially the progress of civilization in Imerina. He frequently spoke with the Prime Minister, urging him to win the people by wise reforms, for instance by the abolition of the *corvée* and the encouragement and improvement of agriculture.

A renowned explorer, M. Alfred Grandidier, was just then at Tananarive. Having made several abortive attempts to penetrate the island, he had at last been given official permission to carry out his explorations.

<sup>1</sup> J. Bianquis, *L'oeuvre des Missions françaises à Madagascar*, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> P. Caussaue, *L'Eglise et l'Etat*, vol. ii, p. 297.



To him, the only report hitherto written on Madagascar and bearing the stamp of truth, was that by the Sieur de Flacourt. When M. Grandidier left Madagascar, he did so regretting that 'in spite of so many attempts and so much effort' he had not been able to achieve more than 'to have raised only one corner of the veil, which, for so long, had kept this interesting island hidden from the eyes of Europeans'.<sup>1</sup> The results of this intrepid explorer's efforts were nevertheless of great scientific value, for they opened new vistas into the past hitherto unthought of; for instance, he discovered the skeletons of extinct species of birds and other animals of gigantic size.

As a visitor in M. Laborde's home, M. Grandidier had excellent opportunities for meeting those in authority, and for forming his own judgment on what was happening in Imerina. He came to the conclusion that the attitude of mistrust to the European Powers was due to two facts. The leading Hovas knew the history of England's colonial expansion, especially in India, and were afraid lest a like process of absorption might happen to their country. France, on the other hand, had made herself disliked by the reiteration of her rights over Madagascar.

Hova policy was, therefore, one of temporizing, of not giving in, and of trying to intimidate by boastfulness. Many mistakes might have been avoided, so M. Grandidier felt, had there been a more accurate knowledge of the character of the Hovas, who had been taken on face value.

Although the Prime Minister was the actual ruler, it was evident that he did not yet feel quite certain of the permanency of his power. His every act was watched, as it was feared that he might proclaim himself Sovereign, which he was already in deed, if not in fact.

Meanwhile, the outer manifestations of civilization were spreading in the capital, which M. Grandidier fully appreciated, giving due credit to those to whom it was due. He mentions Mr. Cameron, who, forty years previously, had been Rana-valo II's architect. M. Grandidier praised the venerable Englishman, 'whose intelligence is in every way equal to that of Laborde, and who renders great services to Queen and people. Mr. Cameron dearly loves the Malagasy and has almost become one of them.'

<sup>1</sup> Grandidier, *Bulletin de la Soc. de Geographie*. April 1872.

The French explorer mentions Dr. Davidson's 'great and benevolent activity' and that in his hospital twenty-five thousand patients had been treated within five years.

But if the explorer bestowed generous praise upon the Europeans, he severely criticized the methods by which the State religion was being enforced: fines and even corporal punishment being penalties for non-attendance on Sundays at a meeting place, for travelling, for selling or buying. Christianity came to be spoken of as 'God's *corvée*', or 'the English *corvée*'.

Ill-treatment was not reserved for recalcitrant pagans only, but Christians were threatened with being put into irons, unless they forsook the 'Roman Catholic idolatry'.

The Franco-Prussian War had its repercussion in far-away Madagascar. Although the Queen had written a letter of sympathy to Napoleon III on hearing of the outbreak of war, her Government's attitude, which had kept to the spirit and letter of the treaty, changed towards the French missionaries when the end was so unfavourable to France. The priests were informed that henceforth they could not erect a church or school without previous permission from the Government, and other such vexatious orders.

If certain aspects of civilization struck M. Grandidier as well on the way, yet he believed that a real upward movement could only follow on the abolition of slavery and of the *corvée*. He hoped England would use her influence towards the abolition of slavery, which, in fact, she was doing, as by the treaty of 1864 she had acquired the right to police the waters of Madagascar against the importation of slaves from Mozambique.

The years went by in steady development—always new laws being passed. The Mozambique slaves were declared free; the Army was reorganized; attendance at school became obligatory. It was prohibited to worship idols, to consult divination, to keep certain feasts connected with paganism. It was made an offence to make rum, to sell or even to drink it.

In 1876 the right to build or hire houses for places of worship or for schools was granted to every one. All those wishing to do so had but to come to an agreement with the owner of the land, and then to ask for the Government licence.

This apparently so simple matter became a cause of endless difficulty for the French missionaries. Pretexts were invariably forthcoming for preventing them to rent land; the desire to please the Government being a strong motive for these manœuvres. Yet, in spite of opposition—open and secret—‘the French Prayer’ steadily increased, Jean Laborde doing all he could to strengthen the hands of his co-religionists, and to further their efforts. His personal prestige, his good nature, and his powers of persuasion usually brought about the desired effect with the local authorities. How keenly he felt on religious matters may well be judged by the fact that he said, as a daily prayer, the following petition: ‘Grant to Queen and Prime Minister the grace to be plucked out of Protestantism, to adore and serve Thee as good Christians. . . .’

Meanwhile, four beautiful churches were being built on the sites where the martyrs had laid down their lives. The sites had been granted ‘for use of worship’, the buildings to belong to the Queen, as did also the land. No compensation or repayment could ever be demanded. These edifices, known as ‘Memorial Churches’ were built at a cost of £18,000,<sup>1</sup> subscribed by friends in England. There had been the intention to build a great many more such memorial churches, but the cost of building being too great, and this in spite of all the labour being by *corvée*, thus unpaid, these four only were erected, the work having been entrusted to the Rev. Sibree.

The directors of the Society were somewhat nervous of the mushroom growth of the new church, and in principle against any connexion between State and Church. However, they could not keep back the rising tide, which it was therefore wise to harness, so as to be of service to the general good. It was here that the influence of the missionaries, whose numbers were steadily increasing, was to have such lasting effects.

Laborde’s report to his Government is an objective testimony to their work, for, so the aged French Consul wrote concerning the Protestant missionaries,<sup>2</sup> ‘They have made good use of the privileges granted them by deeds of such valuable and lasting good which give them a claim to the gratitude of the Malagasy nation.’ Laborde expressed an earnest wish for

<sup>1</sup> Richard Lovet, *The History of the London Missionary Society*.

<sup>2</sup> Rapport, A.E., 27th January 1870.

'cordial relations to exist between those who have the welfare of the people at heart'.

In this same report he gives statistics concerning the various departments of the State; the land forces as seven divisions with forty thousand soldiers; sea forces, nil. Exports per annum, 3,700,000 francs; imports, 3,075,000; revenue from customs duties, 700,000 francs.

He states 'in justice to the Government, that it does its best to destroy the slave trade, whenever its authority is recognized—which is not the case with the Sakalava chiefs.'

In 1878 the venerable, honourable, and loyal representative of France died. His life had been blameless, his efforts directed towards all that was honest, good, and humane. He had been respected and loved by sovereigns and common people alike. Sixteen years previously, in 1862 he had made his will, an interesting and illuminating document, shedding light on his personal relationships and on his possessions. He stated that all he possessed he owed to the Queen's generosity, thanks to which he had had a 'latitude' as he called it 'never restricted by either Radama II or his consort'. 'It is thus with my own money that I have acquired slaves, lands, cattle, etc.'<sup>1</sup>

Little did this loyal servant of Queen Ranavaloa I and of Radama II guess that loyal service and a Queen's word and a Queen's gift would be declared to be null and void by her successor on the throne.

Laborde had made his two nephews his heirs. M. Campan, a clerk in the consulate, and M. Edouard Laborde. No objection was raised by the Government to their inheriting their uncle's possessions, valued at 1,086,000 francs, not counting some mines, which would have represented to a company another million francs.

Being a poor man and needing money, M. Campan decided to build a house and to let it for an income. When it was half finished, a veto from the Government was proclaimed; it was declared, 'the heirs had no right to build, as the ground was not theirs'. Unable to struggle against the Government, M. Campan stopped the building, and believed he had found a solution to his financial difficulties, by selling M. Laborde's favourite homestead to the French Mission. Again a veto:

<sup>1</sup> Testament de Jean Laborde, 8th April 1867.

'land cannot be sold!' The fact that it had belonged to Laborde by gift from the Queen was of no value. 'Why should there be a difference between him and other foreigners?' The heirs were told to refer to paragraph 85 of the Laws of Madagascar. Unable to contend with the Prime Minister, yet in urgent need of money, the heirs agreed to accept a sum of 450,000 francs for that claim, which was beaten down to 300,000 francs.

Yet when it came to receiving the money, the Prime Minister created new difficulties, by demanding the title-deeds. Copies of the originals, duly attested, were shown him, when he suddenly declared that unless the original title was handed over to him, he would decline any further transactions. This M. Campan refused to do, and the 'Laborde legacy' as a precedent became a question of vital interest to all foreigners in Madagascar.

The Consul wrote concerning this affair to M. Gambetta. 'The day will soon come, unless the French Government interferes at once, when every owner will be robbed of his property with impunity.' M. Baudais therefore urged the Government to demand the abrogation of paragraph 85, which made void paragraph 4 of the treaty. He mentioned as a noteworthy fact that abuses of this kind were increasing inland—while on the coast redress was at once granted, 'because warships were occasionally seen in those waters'.

## Chapter X

### THE RISING TIDE

IN 1881 Madagascar was brought all of a sudden to the notice of the British public by questions asked of Sir Charles Dilke, the Foreign Minister, concerning certain articles in the English and French papers imputing to the British Government the intention of seizing the port of Majunga, in order to make it a naval station . . . etc., etc.<sup>1</sup>

Interest in Madagascar had been awakened by the mass conversions of the Hovas to Christianity. To this peculiarly religious aspect, Rear-Admiral Gore Jones's report to Parliament on his visit to Madagascar had added information of a more general nature.

The Admiral had been sent on a mission to Queen Rasoherina, who was especially delighted by it, as the first of this kind. The welcome extended to Queen Victoria's envoy was therefore all the more sincere. The dinner given in his honour took the Admiral somewhat by surprise, owing to 'the strange mixture of barbaric plenty and of French cooking', for, so he wrote, 'We ate *pâté de foie gras* and drank champagne under the shadow of sheep standing on the table roasted whole.'

Of the Queen he wrote: 'She is a good and moral woman.' The Prime Minister he considered one of the ablest men he had ever met; shrewd and politic. Although the Admiral was ready to believe in the Prime Minister's sincerity, as to his religious convictions, he believed him to be 'too clever a man not to see that Christianity is the flood that bears him along, nor to belittle the advantages of keeping the Queen Head of the Church, for nothing of a religious character goes on except under her surveillance'.

The Admiral saw Madagascar through the eyes of the Prime Minister, who claimed to be the author of all the improvements. The Admiral wrote: 'The Hova people are now in that condition that they are ready to burst into perfect civilization: large

<sup>1</sup> Parliamentary Papers, July 1881.

numbers of the younger men are highly educated; the mission schools are full of children—thus the education of the future generations is secured.'

The English visitor knew how to make himself well accepted by every one, while keenly observing what was going on. 'The Independents, as the London Missionary Society missionaries and their flocks were called, is the sect most favoured by the Queen; and the largest in numbers. The fact that the Independents permit any one to preach who is able to do so, made the Hovas prefer this sect, because the Hovas are a talking people; they are all preachers. The Prime Minister approves of this, as it is a sort of safety valve, because public discussions of political matters are not allowed.'

This general survey of conditions in Madagascar was presented to Parliament. For the Admiralty, the Admiral wrote a similar report but with important additions of a political nature. The Prime Minister's differences with the French are mentioned; his anxiety to establish the Queen's authority on the west coast, the need to have a small warship to patrol it and to bring supplies; the necessity of establishing a strong government on the south-west coast, and the Queen's Government, 'being the only one possible', there was agreement on this point between the French and English Consuls.

Provided his Government agreed to this, the Admiral expressed his readiness to carry Hova troops to the bay of St. Augustine 'with or without French assent, and without further expense than that of coal'.

The Admiral suggested that the present of a serviceable gun-boat to the Queen would be an acceptable gift, and at the same time would save further expenditure in preventing the slave trade. But the Admiral looked further ahead. 'If the Government agrees, our placing the Hovas in force on the west coast would be an act of great political importance; it would at once shut off the French claim to survey any part of the island, and it would have an amazing effect in developing legitimate commerce and stop the slave trade.'

The Prime Minister's intention of bringing all Madagascar under the Queen's authority and the way it was done was to prove most unfortunate. Instead of doing so in other parts of the island, it was attempted among those Sakalava chiefs

whose territories were under the protectorate of France, as well as those aided by treaty. By misrepresentations and false pretences, these chiefs were lured to Tananarive, but on their return home they were accompanied by Hova soldiers, who hoisted their national flag on what was French territory.

This high-handed behaviour could not be passed over in silence. Consequently the Foreign Minister wrote to M. Baudais, the Consul at Tananarive, a long letter how to act and how not to act. In his interviews with the Prime Minister he was urged to avoid carefully everything that might arouse doubts as to the Government's intention; or of any ulterior motive, but to make it quite clear that the sole aim was to defend treaty rights. The following sentence expressed the Government's stern determination: 'Not to permit any direct or indirect encroachment on what belongs to France in Madagascar.'<sup>1</sup>

An inquiry among those Sakalava chiefs proved that they had been deceived as to the real intentions of the Hova Government, which they only perceived when threatened with expulsion by force from their territories, unless they recognized the suzerainty of the Queen.

When the Consul remonstrated with the Prime Minister, the latter professed complete ignorance of such treaties with these chiefs and France. He asked for a map to show exactly which territories that power claimed as under her protectorate. When the map was brought him by M. Baudais, the Prime Minister remarked casually that a copy of this very map had been for years in his possession.

For once the Prime Minister overreached himself in insolence and bluff. He was soon to realize that his belief 'in the impotence and incapability of France to do anything by herself was mistaken'.

The story of what happened next is embodied in the French Yellow Book of 1882-5, and in the records of diplomatic correspondence of the Foreign Office. To and fro the shuttle ran between Paris and London; Paris and Madagascar; London and Madagascar.

Unfortunately all the representations made by the French Consul to the Prime Minister failed. Therefore, Captain le

<sup>1</sup> 18th May 1882.



Timbre received orders to remove the offensive Hova flags, if possible without the use of force, and then to proceed to Tamatave to watch events.

True to his instructions, the gallant officer had the flags taken down, not at the point of the bayonet but by a smiling audacity.

At Majunga the captain went on shore accompanied by only three men who, in face of a small garrison, quietly took down the flag and then cut up the mast. At another place the captain sauntered on shore, dressed in white duck, cane in hand, just a French gentleman taking a walk, and then removed the flag.

Next he appeared before Tamatave, where the only Hova vessel, the *Tananarive*, was being laden with munitions to take these and soldiers to Majunga. He thereupon declared that if he caught the *Tananarive* there, he would confiscate the ship with all its contents.

Nothing more happened. Months passed in desultory moves in a kind of long-drawn-out game of chess.

The Prime Minister, having asked advice of the missionaries what best to do, was urged to send an embassy to England which, under pretext of its being a return visit to that of Admiral Gore Jones, would give an opportunity for some Hova nobles to see England, and at the same time to ascertain British feeling with regard to French action.

In a report to Lord Granville on the origin of this embassy, the writer states: 'I know that the Minister would gladly see an English Protectorate rather than continue in this present condition.'<sup>1</sup>

The ambassadors, however, being empowered to discuss the points at issue with France, went direct to Paris; the visit to London to follow in due course.

The envoys of Queen Ranavaloa II arrived the end of October 1882 in Paris where they spent one month<sup>2</sup> in vain attempts to press their Government's point of view.

Lord Lyons, the British Ambassador in Paris, and successive French Ambassadors in London, transmitted important messages, questions, replies. Strange though it may seem, there

<sup>1</sup> W. Deans Gowan, F.R.G.S.

<sup>2</sup> 23rd October to 30th November.

was a surprising unity in point of view where Hova claims were concerned.

The Hova ambassadors had several meetings with the French Ministers, but it was impossible even to come to any compromise. The Hovas started with the premise that 'there was no protectorate over any Sakalava tribes and territory; that the title of "Queen of Madagascar" conceded by France to the Queen in their correspondence, was in itself proof that all the island belonged to her. With regard to the land question they suggested abolishing article 4 of the treaty, to be replaced by a clause permitting French subjects to hold land on leases for 25 years. Concerning the claim by Laborde's heirs, it was stated that he had never bought the land, the Queen having let him have the use for life, but, in memory of his services, a sum of 25,000 francs might be given to his heirs.'

The French Government for its part demanded: The removal of the Hova flag, of garrisons and Customs officials from the places in question; the recognition of the right to hold property; but, as a compromise, it was suggested to have leases of 99 years, to be renewable at will.

As the French Government could not accept the Hova suggestions, the envoys were politely informed that 'With genuine regret and in spite of the sincerity of friendly intentions towards the Government of the Hova people, it found itself compelled to take recourse to the painful necessity of having to see itself to the protection of the rights and interests of France.'

The Hova ambassadors, for their part, declared they had no authority to agree to anything else but what their Government had written down for them. They left Paris for London, where their arrival was not at all welcome to the British Government. In fact, their presence was decidedly awkward, for the question of Egypt and of an understanding with France was to the fore.

Six months earlier, Lord Lyons had written<sup>1</sup> to Lord Granville: 'I think we should be very careful not to do anything with regard to Egypt which would produce lasting resentment on the part of France; and it is always to be remembered that this is the country of surprise, and that the present calm is too unnatural to be durable.'

<sup>1</sup> 30th June 1882.

It was therefore important not to irritate France over a Hova question, especially where interests coincided. For some time private individuals had bombarded the Foreign Office with letters and reports to point out the dangers to British trade in the East should French influence become dominant in Madagascar.

At the moment it was British commerce which held the field. It was rubbed well in that 'if France occupied a large part of Madagascar and especially the harbour of Diego Suarez, it would be an interference with British trade'.

The Reverend Sibree, of the London Missionary Society, voiced this feeling when he wrote: 'If England will stand entirely aside and allow a people she has formerly so largely aided to be crushed, her growing commerce with Madagascar will be ruined, French influence will become predominant in the southern Indian sea. . . .'

Admiral Gore Jones acted the spokesman of all those interested in Madagascar, when pointing out in a report to Mr. Gladstone that, if France were to be allowed to occupy Diego Suarez, then the gain achieved in 1810 by depriving France of a harbour in these waters would be nullified. Once again there would be danger for India. Although the Government realized this and 'could never agree to Diego Suarez becoming a French possession', there was the vexed question of Egypt, for the moment of primary importance.

The question was how to arrive at a *modus vivendi* by which to satisfy every one—the British public, the French Government, and the Queen of Madagascar. It was somewhat of the problem of the wolf, the goat, and the cabbage.

In a letter to Lord Lyons, Lord Granville formulated British feeling in a nutshell:<sup>1</sup> 'Is there any way, and would it be of any use to convey to the French Government that with regard to colonial enterprises, the real jealousy of this country rests not upon their taking possession of savage districts, but of their establishing, contrary to our example, differential privileges in favour of their own subjects?'

Before receiving the Hovas, Lord Granville wished to receive some communication from the French Government as to their present attitude towards Madagascar, which would 'guide him'

<sup>1</sup> *Granville Papers*. Lord Granville to Lord Lyons, 2nd May 1883.

with regard to the tone in which to speak with those ambassadors. The interests of both Great Britain and of France being identical—hitherto the two Powers have acted in accord in all the questions concerning their relations with the Hova Government.

At the same time he wrote: 'I am right in considering that it is your opinion that the less we mention the subject of Tonquin, Madagascar, and Congo to the French Government the better. Am I not right?'

Madagascar versus Egypt—there could be no question as to where the overweight lay.

The British Press, as well as the French, had articles on the question at issue; the latter advised the Hova ambassadors not to count too much on England, 'which has enough to do in Egypt'.

The British Foreign Minister was honestly anxious to see the matter of Madagascar settled. In one of his letters to Lord Lyons he wrote that there would be an end of the question if France would 'buy either the land or the Hova ambassadors'. Lord Granville, however, saw no reason 'why the Hovas should yield to mere bullying. If they have the right on their side, as seems to be the case, they have only to refuse to admit the Protectorate. Then, if the French wish to protect the north-west coast of Madagascar, they must send out an armed expedition for the purpose. It is very doubtful whether the French Government would venture on such a course. . . .'

'The suggested dangers<sup>1</sup> of such an occupation do not strike us as very alarming. They might be guarded against by getting an English station at the Bay of Diego Suarez.'

Lord Lyons was 'to ask confidentially whether it was likely that the French Chamber would sanction an armed expedition against Madagascar'.

After an interview with an English business man, Lord Granville wrote to his friend the Ambassador in Paris 'that it is evident that the French want the bay of Suarez to be included in the territory claimed. These demands are only the first step towards claiming a protectorate of the whole island. . . . I cannot believe that the French will commit such a folly as to incur the expense of sending out an expedition to Madagascar,

<sup>1</sup> Suez.

but if they did it would create a great sensation in this country. The interest in the very remarkable conversion of that country to Christianity by English missionaries is great and widespread. . . . A protectorate would threaten<sup>1</sup> two most popular things—Popery and interference with British trade.’

Lord Lyons, in his reply, pointed out that with regard to an expedition, that would depend upon the attitude of the Chamber towards the Minister in power and on public feeling in the country. ‘One could never know what circumstances may influence it, but particularly jealousy of the opposition of England to such a measure might cause excitement out of doors. The Chamber of Deputies would hardly run counter to it.’

Lord Lyons wrote to Lord Granville that ‘the Hova embassy had heard in Paris that H.M.G. would let the French Government do what they pleased in Madagascar if they were obliging about Egyptian affairs. They wished to know how far this was true. While professing my inability to give him any answer, I pointed out that, however important H.M.G. might consider the Madagascar affair to be, and however much they might be willing to support the Hova embassy, the moment at which the question had turned up was very unfortunate and recommended procrastination. I told him that the Hova embassy must not reckon upon any support from H.M.G. upon the prohibition for foreigners to hold land as that was against all treaty rights and British interest.’

However, once these unwelcome guests were in London, something had to be done for them. Telegrams were exchanged between Lord Ponsonby and Lord Granville, and finally the ambassadors were invited to lunch in Windsor Castle, together with the Russian Ambassador. The telegram ran: ‘Malagasy should come in their Eastern costume.’

What ignorance this order exhibits concerning the Hova court, where European clothing had been the rule for the last fifty years!

The ambassadors presented Queen Victoria with a letter from their Queen—full of gratitude for all this country had done for hers. The nervousness of Ranavaloa II concerning the present situation found a pathetic expression in the following

<sup>1</sup> Presumably he means ‘lead to—bring about’.

wish: 'That Madagascar may be allowed to remain a kingdom as God had created it. For my land is not a part of Europe, nor of Asia, nor of Africa, but an island of the sea,' she wrote, 'and if left in peace and undisturbed, it will continue to advance in all that is good both in commerce and civilization.'

No one wished to disturb this peace. If only Ranavaloa II had given her envoys power to agree to those particular demands which even the British Government felt to be justified!

There was just one moment when the amicable relations between the two Governments were somewhat strained. The British Ambassador had passed on a note, in which these words appeared: 'the Government of Her Majesty does not desire to put forward this mediation, neither to press their good offices upon the French Government,' but as they are at present in direct communication with the Hova ambassadors, they would be prepared to make use of this fact in order to prepare a way for the renewal of more amicable negotiations in Paris between France and Madagascar.

The French Minister exclaimed: 'A more amicable settlement! That depends solely upon the Hova Government.' In reading his reply to the Ambassador one almost hears him gasp as he quotes the English sentence 'to press their good offices'.<sup>1</sup> He professes not to understand what the English understand by that—'for us', he wrote, 'this expression is untranslatable, as the word which renders it literally is absolutely inadmissible'.

For his part, Lord Granville regretted the character of M. Duclerc's note; but, so he wrote, 'It appears it was written under a completely wrong interpretation of the sense of an English phrase. All that was meant was, that Her Majesty's Government while ready to contribute to the establishment of an *entente* had not wished to offer its assistance if not acceptable to France.'

After this exchange of views the political sky cleared at once. The ambassadors were advised to be good and nice children and do what their elders and betters demanded. Meek but obstinate, the envoys declared their inability to go beyond their mandate. As it was useless to return to Paris under these

<sup>1</sup> Documents Diplomatiques.

circumstances, they proceeded to Berlin, where they found no encouragement either, Germany being at that moment friends with France. An equally vain visit to the United States followed.

All diplomatic efforts in Paris, as well as in Tananarive, having failed, orders were given to Rear-Admiral Pierre to proceed to Madagascar, to take Majunga and then to proceed to Tamatave; to present a last ultimatum to the Queen, and, in case of its being refused, to bombard that port.

At Majunga the Admiral drove out 2,000 Hova soldiers, hoisted the French flag, installed a small garrison, and then proceeded to Tamatave.

When news of the attack on Majunga reached Tananarive, popular excitement knew no bounds. All Frenchmen were in danger of their lives; they were threatened to be killed if one shot was fired in Tamatave.

In England fear was rife about the safety of British subjects, and questions were asked in Parliament what was being done to ensure it.

Captain Johnstone was ordered to watch events from the *Dryad*, reinforced by the *Dragon*. A telegram was sent to Mr. Packenham: 'Be prudent. Do not commit the Government.'

All French subjects left Tananarive, but under the greatest difficulty, as every kind of obstacle was put in their way: boycott, no bearers, etc., etc.

The ultimatum having again been refused, Admiral Pierre had to carry out his orders.

This ultimatum contained three demands to recognize a French Protectorate over the northern part of Madagascar, north of the sixteenth parallel; to grant Frenchmen the right to possess land; to pay an indemnity of one million francs to Frenchmen who had been wronged, including the heirs of Jean Laborde.

After having given due notice to the foreign consuls of the impending bombardment, fire was opened on June 10th 1883. The Hovas did not reply, but withdrew to a fort eight kilometres farther inland. True to their threat to set fire to the city if the bombardment took place, this was done and part of it was burned down.

The bombardment lasted one day. When 400 marines entered the fort they found it empty but for a hen, her brood, and a cat.

The next day all French subjects embarked, while the warships fired at the distant fort.

The Admiral declared Tamatave a French town. A few weeks later he was informed by the Foreign Minister that his action to institute a Maire and to ask all foreign consuls to suspend their functions (about which diplomatic representations had been made) was not justified by the character of his instructions; 'that he had outstepped the aim which the Republic had set herself'.<sup>1</sup> The present occupation of Tamatave was to be a means to an end, to make the Hova Government come to terms. Not so the retention of Majunga, which was considered the best means to secure the recognition of the disputed treaty rights on the west coast.

The good understanding between France and England was suddenly endangered by what came to be known in diplomacy as 'the Shaw incident'.

News reached the London Missionary Society that one of their missionaries, the Rev. G. A. Shaw, had been made prisoner by Admiral Pierre and was being kept in close confinement on board one of the warships.<sup>2</sup>

The French Minister of the Navy, for his part, received the following telegram: 'The missionary Shaw is accused of an attempt to poison our soldiers. The indications are very grave. The inquiry is proceeding.'<sup>3</sup>

Lord Granville asked the French Ambassador to throw light on this extraordinary incident, but all the latter could say was to quote what that telegram had contained.

While diplomats were exchanging notes, public opinion in England was getting heated. Protest meetings were held and newspaper articles added fuel to the smouldering fire. The words 'insult' and 'outrage' were flung about, and the Government was asked to intervene, and to use its friendly offices. Questions were asked in Parliament, to be answered by, 'No, Sir, no communication has been made to the Government of France'.

<sup>1</sup> 31st July 1883.

<sup>2</sup> G. A. Shaw, *Madagascar and France*.

<sup>3</sup> 28, Documents Diplomatiques. 28th July 1883.



The French Foreign Minister told Lord Lyons that his Government was anxious to explain all they knew, which was very little. Mr. Gladstone was shown the reply from Paris. 'A judicial inquiry of a very grave character has been instituted against Mr. Shaw.'<sup>1</sup>

How deeply stirred British public opinion was becomes evident from a letter<sup>2</sup> from M. Waddington, the French Ambassador in London, to the Foreign Minister that 'very bitter feeling had been aroused by the Shaw incident, and that in view of the question Mr. Gladstone was certain to make, he wished to know what reply to give.'

In Paris an interview took place between the British Ambassador and the Foreign Minister, M. Challemel Lacour. The latter explained that it took seventy days to get a reply from Tamatave; that telegraphic dispatches were too meagre to be trusted. Lord Lyons pointed out that, in view of the excited state of public opinion in England and in the Press, the Government could not be expected to wait much longer, and that, in order to calm public opinion, Mr. Shaw should be set free.

The British Minister mentions that 'the French Minister had declared this to be impossible, adding, that the English missionaries had been at the bottom of all the trouble the French had had with the Hovas'. Such an accusation could not be admitted. 'Your Excellency is under a misapprehension as to the real state of things,' he said, to be 'tartly' told by M. Challemel Lacour that, if he would not admit plain facts, then there was no use to talk any longer.

However, he promised, at last, to do his best. To this he received the advice: 'Then set Shaw free.'

In England matters were getting more and more complicated. This Lord Plunkett explained to the Minister:

'Your Excellency must excuse my suggesting that he did not yet realize the gravity of the position in England. He must have noticed that the feeling both in Parliament and in the country was that the present Government had pushed consideration for the French to the utmost limit, perhaps even too far. The continued imprisonment of an English missionary on what seemed very slight, if any grounds,

<sup>1</sup> 13th August 1883.

<sup>2</sup> 15th August 1883.

might at any time produce an explosion in England which would have the most serious consequences which Her Majesty's Government might not be able to control.'

In reply to this the French Minister asked rather nervously:

'Voyons, cela ne peut pas avoir de conséquences bien sérieuses. C'est bien là aussi votre idée. Vous ne croyez pas plus que moi à un dénouement tragique.'

But that was exactly what Lord Plunkett believed. He explained that, if there might not be immediate complications, yet, 'events march quickly and anything might happen'. In fact, he feared that a change of Government might be brought about 'because Her Majesty's present advisers showed so strong a desire to be well with France'.

Indeed, to quote Lord Granville's telegram to Lord Plunkett: 'Shaw case incites greatest indignation in this country.' He urged a spontaneous action on the part of the French Government, rather than to exercise pressure.

With what a feeling of relief M. Waddington received the following telegram may well be imagined. 'I ask you to let Lord Granville know that the investigations against the Missionary Shaw have shown there was no ground for prosecution and that he is set at liberty in Bourbon.'<sup>1</sup>

So far, so good; but neither the British public nor Mr. Shaw was satisfied. M. Waddington received a letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs containing a statement to be passed on to Mr. Gladstone:<sup>2</sup> that a combination of hitherto unexplained circumstances had led them to suppose Mr. Shaw guilty of an attack against the security of the troops; that he had been kept prisoner on board a man-of-war under the usual conditions for maintaining discipline on board. 'Whatever the fact of the matter—it has to be admitted that an innocent man, the subject of a friendly Power, has been deprived of his liberty during fifty-four days, and this under painful conditions, and to the prejudice of his interests, and under the weight of accusation which has proved not to be justified. The Government has therefore authorized you to offer a sum of 25,000 francs as a token of our desire to alleviate the consequences of the hardships under which Mr. Shaw has suffered.'

What Lord Granville felt on the matter is evident from an

<sup>1</sup> 21st August 1883.

<sup>2</sup> 8th October 1883.

earlier letter<sup>1</sup> to M. Waddington, which shows how very close on the brink of war with France England had been. After mentioning Mr. Shaw's expected return, and that the London Missionary Society had arranged a public reception, other meetings to follow in the country, he writes:

'Ever since the news of the arrest, the sober men among us have had the greatest difficulty in preventing an outbreak of feeling against France. Their whole proceedings in reference to Madagascar have so stirred the indignation of all those interested in missionary work, that the slightest encouragement from the Mission House would have set the country ablaze. Can't something be done to induce the French Government to intimate that they are prepared to tender Shaw an apology and proffer compensation before he arrives? If this is not done before he lands we, the sober-minded ones, may possibly find ourselves unable further to stem the current. Is it not a case where a stitch in time saves nine?'

This stitch, in the form of a cheque for £1,000, did the trick, and Lord Granville could write to M. Waddington: 'In acknowledging the receipt I beg to convey to Your Excellency the thanks of Her Majesty's Government to the Government of the Republic in finally disposing of this matter.' To quote the noble Lord's concluding sentence:<sup>2</sup> 'The incident respecting Mr. Shaw having been brought to a close in a manner equally honourable to itself and satisfactory to Her Majesty's Government.'

What, after all, had given cause for that serious accusation against 'an honourable and highly respected English gentleman', as which Lord Granville had described Mr. Shaw? 'Where there is smoke, there is also fire'; what, then, were the live coals, if nothing more, to cause the smoke?

Just a combination of unfortunate circumstances, to which fantastic exaggerations of heated imaginations and bitter feelings had added their share.

Some French soldiers fell ill after having consumed—yes, what? Three versions were current: that Mr. Shaw, after having asked for some soldiers to guard his house, had placed in his garden bottles of poisoned wine. According to another, Mr. Shaw, keeping a chemist's shop, had mixed poison with the

<sup>1</sup> Personal and confidential, 23rd September 1883.    <sup>2</sup> 30th November 1883.

medicine sold to some soldiers. While the third made him out to be a bar-keeper, who had put some poison into their drinks.<sup>1</sup>

As it will shortly appear, in each of these versions one word corresponded to the reality—garden, poison, spirits. It is the juxtaposition which was altogether erroneous.

This is what happened, so far as it is possible to ascertain.<sup>2</sup>

When it was beyond doubt that Tamatave would be bombarded, some Hovas brought their possessions to Mr. Shaw's house for safeguarding.

Some time after the bombardment, the riff-raff of the native population, bitterly anti-Hova, knowing that Mr. Shaw's house contained these possessions broke into it, and looted it. What was not taken away was flung into the garden, including the contents of Mr. Shaw's medicine chest and some bottles of alcohol, which this naturalist used for preserving specimens of scientific interest.

Some French soldiers, finding these bottles lying about, had tasted the liquid, but both alcohol of 90 per cent and laudanum drunk neat will of necessity bring about symptoms of poisoning.

An inquiry was held. It led to Mr. Shaw's garden. He was known to be antagonistic to the French, a staunch supporter of the Hovas and temporarily interpreter for the Governor of Tamatave. He was thereupon suspected of having attempted poisoning and might have been tried for his life.

In accordance with French law he had not been formally charged during the inquiry. When told that he was to be set free, Mr. Shaw therefore asked what he had been supposed to be guilty of. 'An imprudence,' was the officer's reply. 'You should have taken care after the looting had taken place to see that no bottles had been left lying about!'

How little was needed to bring about a war between England and France!

Just then Ranavaloa II died. The Prime Minister at once raised a young relation of his late wife to the throne under the name of Ranavaloa III and married her.

<sup>1</sup> Reported in all good faith by various French writers in their books on Madagascar.

<sup>2</sup> G. H. Shaw, *Madagascar and France*, op. cit.

## Chapter XI

### TOWARDS THE CLIMAX

Two things of evil omen occurred on the Queen's coronation day. Early in the morning, she heard one of the hens in the palace yard crowing like a cock; in the afternoon her diadem fell off her head while she was mounting the royal platform. A shiver of apprehension chilled the heart of all those who witnessed this incident.

In the speech from the throne a tone of nervous defiance was unmistakable. Again and again the Queen mentioned her reliance upon God for protection, her trust in divine help to enable her to keep intact the legacy left by Radama I to his successor. 'Radama I,' she said, 'devoted himself body and soul to make one single kingdom of all the territories which the sea encircles; a kingdom which he left to Ranavaloa I, then to his two nieces and now to me. Therefore, should any one want to take a piece of it, however small, I will defend our common fatherland together with you, as though I were a man.' Whether she was acting on her own conviction, or 'as the none too unwilling slave of her second husband', cannot be proved. At any rate, two more years were to pass during which the Prime Minister held France at bay.

Since the days of Radama I's father the royal emblem of the Hova rulers had been a falcon. Radama I had a bronze model made of it; out of the falcon's head seven points of assegais were protruding. Quite possibly the Queen and her consort were genuinely convinced that the falcon of Madagascar could with impunity ignore the Gallic cock, emblem of a negligible country.

Ranavaloa III and the Prime Minister knew nothing of history except what they had learnt from their British friends, who told these semi-savage rulers a garbled version of facts. The Prime Minister fully believed that Napoleon I,<sup>1</sup> 'convinced of the

<sup>1</sup> *Journal de mon Intendance près de S.E. le Premier Ministre de la Reine de l'Isle de Madagascar*, par J. Vassé, p. 165, Alger. This rare copy is in the possession of M. G. Grandidier, General Secretary of the Geographical Society of Paris.

utter rottenness of the French nation, a people of liars, thieves, even cannibals, had of his own accord asked England to take him under her protection'. Great Britain stood there as the undisputed ruler of most parts of the world; a nation favoured and specially blessed by God. In the palace chapel, before Queen and Prime Minister, a native preacher<sup>1</sup> had mentioned in his sermon that Jesus Christ had been received in audience by Queen Victoria when visiting England. When asked whether He would go also to France the answer had been 'that on no account would He have anything to do with so accursed a nation as the French'.

Thus, England represented for the Malagasy everything that was good, noble, powerful, and successful. France, on the other hand, was despicable. It is this mental attitude of the Hova dictator which alone explains his actions during the next three years. What happened from 1882 to 1885 between Hova rulers and French admirals can best be compared to a siege. In the heart of the island, in his mountain fastness sat His Excellency the Prime Minister, out of reach of the shells which a few French warships were occasionally firing at some distant part. He was convinced that no attempt would be made to attack his stronghold by force of arms; words, threats, ultimatums were harmless weapons. All he had to do was to drag out discussions carried on at Tamatave, and thereby wear out the plenipotentiaries of France. His hope was that, as several times before, so also now, some political events in Europe would draw off the attention from Madagascar. There would then automatically follow a cessation of the desultory bombardment, and from the blockade which, as time proved, was as harmless to the Hovas as unprofitable to the French.

Admirals came and went; their reports to Paris vibrate with soreness at the loss of time. One feels them chafing under orders to try all means to achieve the desired end, without having recourse to force. The Hovas scoffed at the French and scorned them, for so they said, 'they are dogs which bark only, but never bite'.

There was, however, one man who, understanding Hova mentality, wrote plain words to the President of the Council

<sup>1</sup> A native, as no European clergy ever took a service in that chapel; this was done to prevent the French priests claiming equality of right with the English missionaries.

of Ministers, M. Baudais. He had been ordered to agree to any compromise, even to the complete evacuation of Madagascar, if only an end was made to this situation. Yet he knew that force alone could do this. One almost hears him groan as he writes these words: 'All concessions will be for the Hovas a sign of weakness. They will become all the more exacting.'

At last public opinion in France seemed to awaken on this matter, but only in a kind of semi-dazed condition; for the Chamber passed a vote,<sup>1</sup> 'that the Republic was resolved to use every means to reduce the Hovas to submission in case of a break of the negotiations'. That there was to be no such break—only a further stretching of the ropes of diplomacy—to that the Hova arch-diplomatist saw himself. And yet it might have been politically a good moment for drastic measures, as the British Government was trying to please France. There is a plaintive tone in Lord Granville's letter to the Ambassador in Paris when he wrote, 'we must be very clumsy to excite so much indignation in France and at the same time run the risk of being turned out next month for being subservient to them'.<sup>2</sup> If the Government was friendly, not so the public opinion, for, so he continued: 'Waddington seems in earnest to bring about a good understanding, but our Press, over which the Government has absolutely no control, will be most offensive until the vote of censure against the Conference,<sup>3</sup> which is almost sure to be brought on, is decided one way or another. It will require all Salisbury's want of caution to try to come in upon a quarrel with all Europe upon the Egyptian question.'

What was the Madagascar question in comparison to that one? Things were therefore permitted to slide.

In April 1885 a new vote was passed in the Chamber that France meant to uphold her treaty rights. It was hoped that this information would reach Tananarive and influence the Government to come to terms.

M. Baudais knew better: 'Unless this declaration is backed by the despatch of troops it will have no effect. An expedition need be neither long nor difficult. A serious and prompt action is wanted. . . . The Hova Government will cede only to

<sup>1</sup> *Livre Jaune*, 28th March 1884.

<sup>2</sup> 28th May 1884.

<sup>3</sup> Question of the Suez Canal.

force. Such a march need not necessarily mean conquest, but be a means to coerce the Hovas, not to violate a treaty.

'As to the Hovas resisting our arms, they themselves admit that it is impossible. The day when our troops will begin to march towards Tananarive, our conditions, whatever they may be, can be imposed, rather than discussed.' M. Baudais mentioned that the Hova plenipotentiaries had frankly admitted the reason for their perpetual haggling and bargaining. 'If you had used force', he said, 'we could not appeal to your goodness. It is because you have always acted with gentleness that we have made all our proposals.'

M. Baudais was insistent in his report to Paris on the necessity not to use the word 'protectorate' as offensive to the Hovas. He felt that the trend of events was inevitably leading towards it. 'We should leave to the Hova Government its autonomy,' he wrote, '. . . we must let the Queen really reign, uniting under her rule the fifteen to twenty tribes of Madagascar. She should reign under our direction and in accordance with our counsel. In a word a protectorate, but large and generous, without letting the hand which guides be felt. We cannot possibly govern the country by ourselves at present.'

Three years had thus passed since the rupture of diplomatic relations, when peace was suddenly within sight. Even Hova patience was beginning to wane; and therefore the offer of the Italian Consul in Tananarive to put out feelers (but in an absolutely private capacity) was accepted by both parties.

The situation in Madagascar had caused the Italian Ambassador in London to approach Lord Salisbury with the question: 'Whether Her Majesty's Government would feel inclined to join the Italian Government in offering their mediation to bring this war to an end.' The French Ambassador reported that Lord Salisbury had replied: 'That the British Government undoubtedly desired the re-establishment of peace in Madagascar, but that he did not consider himself called upon to offer a mediation which had not been asked of him.'

In Paris it was thought that a fresh voice, and possibly gentler than that of M. Baudais, might help to bring about the desired end. Recalled to France 'to report', the one man who



really knew the Hovas was replaced by M. Patrimonio, Consul-General at Beyrout.

On 17th December 1885 a treaty was signed which gave full satisfaction to France, thanks to the delightful vagueness of terms, which avoided giving umbrage to the Queen and her people. A *modus vivendi* which secured the essence, if not the outer form, of what had become the *sine qua non*—namely the Protectorate. The obnoxious word was not inserted in the text of the treaty, not even with regard to the Sakalava, 'as the special is included in the general'.

The Hova Government accepted a French Resident, who was to have a military escort, to represent Madagascar in all external relations, all the Malagasy abroad were to be placed under French protection.

While presiding over the foreign relations, the Resident was not to interfere in the interior administration of the estates of Her Majesty the Queen, to whom the title 'of Madagascar' was granted. The indemnity clause was inclusive of all claims, instead of specialized. The Hova Government promised goodwill towards the Sakalava; otherwise France would have the right to enforce protection. The land tenure question was solved by the compromise of 99 years' leases, renewable at will without Government interference. France undertook to send technical and military instructors, 'when asked to do so'. She took possession of the harbour of Diego Suarez with a hinterland of one and a half miles, being free to build there whatever she might consider necessary.

M. Patrimonio, in reporting to the Government, added: 'It is left to the Resident to make the best of the advantages stipulated by the treaty'; of which the possession of Diego Suarez especially rejoiced him. 'That beautiful harbour of such strategic importance, especially in case the Suez Canal was closed by war.'

What was joy to the Frenchmen was grief to Admiral Gore Jones. When the cession of Diego Suarez became known, the Admiral expostulated with the Foreign Minister that if this was permitted, then the success of the war of 1810 was nullified.

M. Patrimonio admitted in his report that to gain this concession had cost a hot battle.

The two French plenipotentiaries were invited to Tananarive,

where they were royally entertained, but also bombarded with questions by the Prime Minister, as to the exact interpretation of every word of every clause. Apparently satisfied with the explanations given, all seemed plain sailing, but herein the Frenchmen were deceived. The wily Prime Minister was not going to enter into the parlour of the spider without having first prepared a nice hole through which to escape.

The plenipotentiaries were asked, 'in order to avoid all possible future misunderstandings, to give their signatures to a letter composed out of questions and answers'. This was done<sup>1</sup>, and hereby the Hova had forged for himself a weapon with which to fight the French Resident until the day that it proved to be a two-edged sword.

In a postscript to this letter a reply was given in the affirmative to the question whether the Queen of Madagascar was free to conclude commercial treaties with foreign Powers. Yes, 'if they are not in contradiction to the stipulations of the treaty just signed'.

Monsieur de Freycinet authorized all French ambassadors, when questioned concerning this treaty, to state 'that nothing was thereby changed with regard to former ones concluded between the Hova Government and other countries. That no obstacle had been created by this arrangement to the free development of private interests by any one, of whatever nationality.'<sup>2</sup>

The Yellow Book tells the actual story of this battle, whilst the secret manœuvres were made known to the British Foreign Minister through the reports of the British Vice-Consul in Tananarive, the Rev. Pickersgill, a former missionary.

The Consul, Mr. Haggard, was stationed at Tamatave, as being the most important port. There, however, nothing of any interest happened. The vice-consul, on the other hand, found himself in the centre of things. His knowledge of Malagasy, his friendship with the Prime Minister's secretary, and his being a *persona grata* with both Prime Minister and the Queen, afforded him exceptional opportunities for playing an important role. He tried to teach the Prime Minister how to play against the representative of France. Although Mr.

<sup>1</sup> Tamatave, 9th January 1886. Lettre interpretative (non ratifié par le Gouvernement français).

<sup>2</sup> Quai d'Orsay, 27th December 1885. Corr. Diplom., vol. 25.

Pickersgill's reports to the Foreign Minister supply the local colour, he also shows himself as a wire-puller.

This did not please Lord Salisbury, who foresaw no good results from conflict between British and French agents at the capital.

If the French Government believed the reasonableness of Admiral Miot, and the conciliatory spirit of M. Patrimonio, to have been the means for bringing about the treaty, not so Mr. Pickersgill. He knew better; for so he wrote to Lord Salisbury:

'The rapid winding up of a long-drawn difficulty has been effected mainly by the boldness and tact of General Willoughby. The situation demanded an English mediator, for the French are practically incapable of understanding the Malagasy at first-hand acquaintance; and it was at the same time equally imperative that the settlement should be negotiated by a servant of the Madagascan Government'.

Pickersgill mentions having advised the Queen to put the fullest confidence in the General—'for once in the history of Madagascar an affair of supreme importance for the Hova has been conducted in silence'—only the Queen, the Prime Minister and his secretary knew of this mission.

'The success was such that even the neglected Foreign Minister congratulated Willoughby. . . . All of a sudden, General Willoughby became the important man to the Prime Minister.'<sup>1</sup>

Before this important personage, the commander of the Hova army, could proceed to Tamatave, the Prime Minister had asked Admiral Miot that he should be treated with due consideration because an intimate and confidential friend of the Queen and himself.

When the Prime Minister of England first learned of this matter a severe rebuke was passed on to Willoughby<sup>2</sup>: 'That H.B.M.'s Government have heard with grave displeasure of your being in the service of the Madagascar Government as an armed contention is going on. Your further continuance will be regarded by them as a wilful aggravation of a most serious offence.'

The commander of the Hova army did not seem to take

<sup>1</sup> P.R.O. Pol. Cor., February 1886.

<sup>2</sup> P.R.O. Pol. Cor., July 1885.

this warning to heart. From Tamatave he reported to his friend, the vice-consul, what happened during the conference. One of the Hova had said: 'If you had dealt with us by force from the beginning, there would have been no discussion. We have acknowledged our willingness to negotiate with you on terms you demanded formerly.'

Lord Rosebery received from the vice-consul a description<sup>1</sup> of the Governor-General's entry into Tamamatave, which was 'unobtrusive'. It appears that when the Jesuits wanted to join his train, M. le Myre de Vilers had declined their offer, and that in the presence of the Malagasy officials he had said 'that he had not come to give any special countenance either to them or to their church. His heart,' he said, 'was European, and he intended to be friendly with all persons and all creeds, and to be a true help to Madagascar along the path of civilization.'

'To the British subjects he is as agreeable as to myself,' wrote Mr. Pickersgill; 'to the Malagasy sweeter than honey. The Prime Minister and the chiefs are thoroughly aware of the importance which attaches to the opening movement in this amicable war of diplomacy. Already he has had a check in it, being pointed out that the Malagasy Foreign Minister will remain at his post.' Mr. Pickersgill suggested flattering M. le Myre de Vilers in letting him believe himself to be the originator of reforms.

This letter<sup>2</sup> ended with the assurances to Lord Rosebery that the writer would do all he could to aim at friendly relations with the French Resident.

The difficulties of the task entrusted to the Resident were to be enhanced by the three Englishmen in favour at the Court; Parret, Willoughby and Pickersgill. The role the latter played becomes evident from his letters to the Foreign Minister, in which the vice-consul prides himself upon his influence and power, and on being able to put many a spoke in the Resident's wheel. If Mr. Pickersgill believed himself to act as a good patriot, whose zeal would be appreciated, he was soon to be disillusioned.

In fact, Lord Rosebery had no doubt whatever of that. Mr. Pickersgill's knowledge of Malagasy and of being much liked

<sup>1</sup> P.R.O., February 1886.

<sup>2</sup> May 1886.

by the Hova Government were assets, yet on the other hand, he was making things exceedingly awkward for the British Government. Concerning Mr. Pickersgill and Madagascar, the Foreign Minister wrote to Sir Villard Lister: 'It has not been considered compatible with the general policy of Her Majesty's Government and the necessity of keeping on good terms with France, to expand British influence in Madagascar or to give much support to the Hova Government. Their instructions to Mr. Pickersgill have therefore been designed to moderate his zeal and his power.'<sup>1</sup>

Consequently, in reply to his promise to use his influence, the vice-consul received something of a cold shower. After acknowledging the letter the Foreign Minister wrote:<sup>1</sup> '... we therefore in no way doubt your discretion in these matters, but the situation in Madagascar is so singular that Lord Rosebery wishes me again to impress upon you the importance of abstaining from any interference between the French Resident and the Malagasy Government. You must remember that the Government has concluded a treaty which gives the Resident an exceptional position, and that your duty is not to tender advice to the Malagasy Government on questions of policy, but to watch carefully over the interests and welfare of British subjects. This course will not impede, but rather facilitate, the cordial relations which it is your duty to maintain with the Malagasy.'

This last order the vice-consul found an easy task; to abstain from interference—impossible.

A letter by Mr. Pickersgill to a friend, and passed on to the Foreign Office, throws interesting side-lights on the situation in Tananarive.

'The natives', so he wrote, 'are satisfied. They consider the price paid for obtaining peace not too great for assured impunity from foreign aggression. On the other hand, the feeling among the British residents is one of keenest disappointment and alarm. They see, of course, that England is elbowed out of the political game in Madagascar altogether, and naturally enough fail to remind themselves that England deserves nothing better. But matters might have been a great deal worse for us than they actually are. We might

<sup>1</sup> P.R.O. Pol. Cor., 21st July 1886.

have been thrust out of the commercial game. Our trade is free, and there can be no real hindrance to the influence of the British capital in the island, so long as we retain the goodwill of the natives.

'The French Resident may sit in state upon barren honours, but the profit will remain with the British enterprise. But our policy in the future will have to be an extremely discreet and conciliatory one. I have reason to believe that such a policy will not present a difficult course to pursue.'

This might have been so had Mr. Pickersgill not been in Tananarive. As it was, he deliberately encouraged the Prime Minister and the Queen to resist every demand made by the French Resident. At the weekly meeting between the Hova dictator and M. le Myre de Vilers, it was the former who made the actual move on the metaphorical chess-board, but he did so as advised by the vice-consul. What passed at that table was reported to him, and he in his turn wrote about it to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. His letters convey graphic descriptions of the two opponents: the Hova imperturbable, behaving with 'studied suavity when not taunting'; the Resident, known 'to be calm and even phlegmatic' losing his temper, becoming 'blustering and arrogant', riding off after the meeting 'to cool his heated brow and hot blood!'

M. le Myre de Vilers had proposed, as a useful reform, the introduction of a national coinage, instead of chopping off silver from five-franc pieces and dollars. 'So as not to link up Madagascar with the Republic', Mr. Pickersgill encouraged the Prime Minister to refuse this suggestion. Instructions were, however, at once sent to Willoughby, at that time in London, to order the minting of a first issue of small coins with the head of the Queen and an inscription in Malagasy.

In spite of the Resident's declaration that under the treaty no Hova embassy could be sent to London, it had nevertheless been sent. The British Government, however, did not recognize it. If the Ambassador was diplomatically ignored, his activity, as a seller of concessions, was decidedly successful. He sold one to a company promotor, who undertook to lend to the Queen at 7 per cent, on the guarantee of the custom dues, the £40,000 which she owed to France. On 28th June

1886 the charter of 'The Royal Bank of Madagascar' was signed in Tananarive. Among the shareholders were 'many supporters of the London Missionary Society and of the Friends Missionary Association'; so Mr. Pickersgill informed Lord Rosebery, adding that he had used 'a French wind to fill English sails'.

That bank question almost brought about a diplomatic rupture. The Resident-General declared to the Prime Minister that 'without the consent of France no British syndicate could be formed'. 'Pray, why not? Surely this is a purely Hova question—an interior affair, into which you cannot interfere.'

As it turned out, this was not to be the case.

The British Government declared that the capitalists could not expect any special protection.

The French Government, for its part, announced that in case of war, there would be no indemnity paid, etc. All this made the prospective investors hesitate. The delay displeased the Prime Minister. Rather than wait for the proverbial 'two birds in the bush', he decided to take the one ready to hand, 'namely the offer of the Banque d'Escompte to advance at six per cent the sum required to pay off the debt'. This loan was to be refunded in twenty years. As security French agents were to be in charge of the Customs at Tamatave, to collect the dues on behalf of the Queen.

The failure to create a bank vexed Mr. Pickersgill greatly. His annoyance made him write to that particular friend: 'If our Government is so careless about the commercial interests as about our political, we shall be bigger fools than we are sometimes taken to be.'

The Resident-General's position certainly required all that prudence and tact for which he had been renowned. His position in Tananarive was difficult beyond words on account of the fundamental difference of point of view between him and the Prime Minister. The one based his demands on the articles of the treaty; the other on the explanatory letter. On the question of the Malagasy Consul in London, and on the registration of leases at the Residency, he was bluntly told: 'You are in no way a part of our Government and therefore you cannot be Foreign Minister. You have no right to interfere

in commercial affairs like consuls, leases, etc. These are internal affairs. . . . An office is ready where Malagasy officials will meet you, when you have anything to put on record.' Reporting on this meeting, Mr. Pickersgill explains this as 'a taunt, for hitherto not even a pedlar from Reunion has followed the Resident'.<sup>1</sup>

Fresh difficulties arose over Diego Suarez. The situation became so strained that the vice-consul felt that something had to be done both locally and in Paris. He hinted to one of the Jesuit fathers that 'unless the strain was relieved upon the political situation, he and his brethren might soon have to pack up and march to the coast'. Mr. Pickersgill suggested also that if the Resident-General could be induced to handle the difficulty in a less arrogant spirit, he for his part would be glad to do everything in his power to prevent a rupture.

'The hint was taken,' wrote Pickersgill, 'the desired advice was whispered—the suggestion to "let sleeping dogs lie"—letter—treaty—was accepted. The next meeting was more friendly, and all dangers of a rupture disappeared.'

Meanwhile an earlier letter<sup>2</sup> was travelling towards London, in which Mr. Pickersgill had written venturing

'to suggest that Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador in Paris be instructed to make confidential representations of the state of affairs . . . and to secure more power for the Resident. This gentleman had been in Admiral Miot's mind as French Resident, as a man of sympathetic mind, possessing the necessary patience and much *savoir-faire*. He is the opposite of an Anglophobe and best of all, in our interest, he is not, I trust, dangerously crafty.

'One cannot conclude beforehand that it will be a hopeless thing to convey a hint to the Foreign Minister of France in his own interest. Appendix or no appendix, there is the germ of a great advantage to the Republic in the new treaty, and M. de Freycinet ought to be wise enough to see that possibilities arising from the treaty cannot be developed under constant irritation. Moreover he ought to be made to understand that it is impossible to drive the Malagasy where diplomacy had failed to lead them. Obstinance is the

<sup>1</sup> P.R.O. Pol. Cor., 23rd July 1886.

<sup>2</sup> P.R.O. Pol. Cor., 4th September 1886.



strongest point of their nature. An Englishman can be obstinate on occasion, but he would never dream of competing with these Hovas.

‘As far as we are concerned with the germ of a great advantage to France, English susceptibilities may be advised not to manifest alarm on that side, if the treaty be permitted to stand as it is explained by the Madagascar Government. For the Republic’s hatching power is very limited, and long before anything formidable can come out of the shell, we shall have a much more vigorous development, ready to make a meal of it. Should it be found impossible to induce M. de Freycinet and the Foreign Minister to listen to reason, the only alternative is war, and the Madagascar Government cannot do better than begin it by exciting a quarrel in the enemy’s camp. The Prime Minister has prepared a letter addressed to M. de Freycinet, which is calculated to hasten the downfall of the present Ministry, in the hope that one less inimical to Madagascar will then come into power. This letter General Willoughby is being instructed to use only on the last resource. (A copy is included.)’

This game of chess between Prime Minister and Resident-General was being keenly watched in England. Questions were asked in Parliament, to which the Foreign Minister replied: ‘As long as the rights of British subjects as guaranteed by treaty are not interfered with, Her Majesty’s Government have no ground for making any representation.’ *The Times* published an article on Madagascar in which M. le Myre de Vilers was described as ‘a conciliatory man and no friend of intrigues, but what can he do in a capital where he and his staff have no interest, no sympathy?’ The writer of the article evidently voiced public opinion when he wrote: ‘It is surprising that the French people, at least the Protestants of that country, do not insist on the abandonment of the ill-starred adventure on the African coast, which was commenced to serve the sinister ends of Jesuit fanatics.’

On the other hand, in France, it was as genuinely believed that all the difficulties encountered in Madagascar were ‘due to the machinations of the English missionaries’.

The French Resident had written to Paris to complain of the British Vice-Consul. The Chargé d’Affaires in London was

asked 'to notify the situation and to point out further, that the course which the Queen was at present pursuing, as encouraged by Mr. Pickersgill, might lead to a renewal of hostilities between the two countries'.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Rosebery expressed regret, but 'that, without particulars of the points in which Mr. Pickersgill has shown himself hostile to the French Resident, Her Majesty's Government were unable to disapprove of his conduct'. . . . A suggestion was thrown out that M. le Myre de Vilers might be misinformed.

Several communications passed between London and Paris. Although the French Government could not put the dot on the i, the British Foreign Office, for its part, could easily have done so. Whether it was sympathy for the French Resident, or in order to stand right in the eyes of the Quai d'Orsay, Lord Salisbury ordered a copy of Lord Rosebery's rebuke to Mr. Pickersgill to be forwarded to Paris.

That the British Government desired cordial relations was duly notified to Consul and Vice-Consul in Madagascar. They were 'to keep neutral, and avoid raising controversial questions'. Alas, in May 1887, this became impossible. Mr. Haggard, the Consul, found himself 'twixt the devil and the deep sea', and this in connexion with the vexed question of the Exequatur. He had received orders to ask for it direct from the French Resident. The Italian and American Consuls had done so already—when suddenly a deadlock was reached by the Prime Minister, who declared to the Resident that 'recognition of the Resident's right of intervention in delivering the Exequatur would be a virtual recognition of the Protectorate of France over Madagascar'.

In fact he went so far as to declare 'that he would sooner go to war than to have his country's independence bartered away in this fashion'.

Mr. Pickersgill excused himself for having kept back Mr. Haggard's application to M. le Myre de Vilers. 'We shall be blamed if things get into a worse mess than at present. You told me the Government is determined not to have a Madagascar question. They are certain to have one and an ugly one, if I deliver your letter to Vilers.'

<sup>1</sup> Quai d'Orsay, Correspondence Diplomatiques, September 1886.

The Exequatur<sup>1</sup> question being too delicate to be settled, a policy of 'letting things be in suspense' was tacitly pursued.

The Prime Minister believed himself to have won the game.

Yet in spite of everything M. le Myre de Vilers was gaining ground little by little, and this by sheer force of moral value. The Prime Minister came to consider him a real friend whom he trusted and honoured. It had required patience, and was going to require it for many a year to come, to reach the results desired for and in Madagascar. The unofficial armistice had every chance of turning into a lasting peace, when the labour of years was undone by an unforeseen event. The Queen and Prime Minister learnt through a Reuter telegram, that England had accorded to France the right of a protectorate over Madagascar 'with all its consequences'.

Aghast, the Hova rulers were utterly unable to understand how England, the trusted power, could act thus. Not a whisper of such a possibility had been heard; yet here was the accomplished fact. How was that possible?

But England had for some time been trying to come to an amicable understanding with her neighbours in Africa. The frontiers on the Congo, Niger, in the Soudan and East Africa, required to be definitely delimited. In order to be able to have the undisputed Protectorate over the Sultanate of Zanzibar some bartering had to be done: Heligoland had served that purpose for Germany; for France a free hand in Madagascar proved sufficient.

The two great Powers having fixed the price to their mutual satisfaction, a treaty was duly signed by Lord Salisbury and M. Waddington on 5th August 1890.

That England had given France a free hand in Madagascar appeared to the Prime Minister almost like an act of treachery. In utter despair he was going to send an appeal to Lord Salisbury. In order to save the Foreign Minister 'a long communication' Mr. Pickersgill promised to convey the message, which ran thus:

'That the Queen of Madagascar and her Government have heard with profound sorrow the news from Europe

<sup>1</sup> To ask for diplomatic recognition. P.R.O. Pol. Cor., 15th May 1887, 31st August 1887.

respecting an Anglo-French agreement relative to their country. They are distressed beyond measure to learn that England after an unbroken period of friendship and goodwill, extending over more than a quarter of a century, is thrusting them into the hands of their enemies; they know not why they should be thus treated, seeing that they have honestly made efforts to open the resources of the island British enterprise, and they plead for that sympathetic treatment which a weak nation, struggling to maintain its independence, has a right to claim at the hands of the strong.'

Having acted as the transmitter of this message, Mr. Pickersgill continues:

'There is only one wise word to be said in comment. It is a good deed to drive an ignorant child to school, but there is always a possibility of living long enough to have to meet him grown up into a person of importance. Now that the text of the declaration of 5th August is known here, the opinion of those who have become disgusted with the native dilatoriness and the greed of the ruling coteries is that what the Malagasy Government regard as an ill wind, cannot fail to blow good both to the European settlers and to the mass of the people; while the few, who still cherish a desire to see the nation independent, are prepared to welcome the wind, as likely to give steerage way and thus afford a chance of some day making a run for liberty.'<sup>1</sup>

Unable to make this run for liberty right away, very definite preparations towards it were nevertheless made. The friendly relations which had gradually been established between the Prime Minister and the successive French representatives, became again strained.

Although the Hova rulers were bitterly angry with the British Government, the vice-consul remained a *persona grata*. He reported to Lord Salisbury that similar, but not greater, courtesy was shown the Resident than to him. It appeared to him quite amusing to note that no advantage beyond mere precedence due to rank was accorded the Resident.

Matters, however, ceased to be amusing when military preparations were made with great haste. To the Resident

<sup>1</sup> 20th September 1890 to the Marquess of Salisbury.

General's question: 'Why all this landing of arms and munitions?' the reply was a haughty: 'That is none of your business.'

Attacks on Frenchmen became of frequent occurrence; seven of them were murdered. A general feeling of insecurity for all Europeans was on the increase. Convinced that France would merely continue to threaten, the Hova officials tried to turn against the French the current of popular discontent due to their own exactions.

That, sooner or later, there would be war was evident. As the Malagasy prepared for it, the only course for the French to pursue was to do likewise. A careful survey of the track from Tananarive to Tamatave was made by Colonel de Beylie and, by his suggestion also, from Majunga to Andriba, by a young officer under the guise of a mining engineer. From the capital to Andriba the path had been surveyed by a Jesuit<sup>1</sup> and by M. d'Anthouard, the French Consul.

Within the Hova Government a new element had developed which still more complicated matters; namely, the Queen's emancipation from the tutelage of her consort. M. le Myre de Vilers explained this 'by her eagerness to enjoy life, being restrained in this by her old and jealous husband'. She had abettors in this policy of opposition to the Prime Minister's suggestions, who had come to realize what war with France would mean, while she, 'intoxicated by the honours paid her by the people, was ambitious to play a role'. She found support for this among certain coteries of the Old Hova party. The Queen resisted the advice of prudence, and there was thus conflict within the Palace and the council chamber.

By 1889 conditions had become untenable and M. le Myre de Vilers, who had left Tananarive in 1887, was sent back as Plenipotentiary Extraordinary to bring about a definite settlement.

He did his utmost to try to find a peaceable way out of this situation, but the Prime Minister's waning authority and the Queen's ambition, were aggravating elements in an already impossible state of affairs. The chariot of the Hova was rushing in a mad race towards the precipice. Remonstrances were disregarded, and acts of violence were more and more openly carried out. The Queen's nephew publicly insulted

<sup>1</sup> Le Père Colin.

and wounded one of the Resident-General's escort, and this with complete immunity.

The plight of the Prime Minister was sore. Prudence urged him to come to terms, but he could not run the risk of making further concessions, as such a course might lead to a revolution and bring about his downfall. Yet he had to arrive at a decision, for the moment had come to accept or refuse an ultimatum, which was handed him on 22nd October 1894 by M. le Myre de Vilers, who spoke in plain words to him, permitting of no doubt as to what the outcome of war would be. 'Once war has been declared,' he said, 'we shall not be able to arrest the course of events, and from the very nature of things we shall have to impose our domination. Give yourself no illusions as to the issue of the war. . . .'

The Prime Minister nevertheless refused, 'choosing the less immediate danger of the more distant evil of war', rather than run the risk of losing his sway of power; little guessing that this would be his fate in any case.

That the diplomatic rupture did not take place immediately was due to the necessity for getting all French citizens safely out of Tananarive, so as to avoid ill-treatment or any one being kept as hostage. All preparations having been made during the last two months for the eventuality of an evacuation, a party of a hundred left Tananarive on 28th October, to attempt what was considered by the Hovas an impossible feat—namely, to reach Majunga by a march of twenty days along a practically untracked path, then to go down the river—a twelve days' undertaking.

No obstacles to their departure were put in their way by the Prime Minister, who believed that these soldiers and civilians would be dealt with on his behalf by fever and by boycott.

The journals<sup>1</sup> kept by the leaders of this small band tell the story of a great adventure, which proved an unqualified success. Two hundred and fifty kilometres were covered in 94 hours of actual march, and two hundred and fifty kilometres down the river in 50 hours' navigation. Orders not to reply by force to provocation had been strictly adhered to.

<sup>1</sup> A. D'Anthouard et A. Ranchot, *L'Expédition de Madagascar. Journal de Route*, 1920.

M. le Myre de Vilers left Tananarive for Tamatave on 30th October. A Kabary was therefore held. After reporting on the Queen's anxiety to come to amicable terms with the French, and of her inability to accede to their demands, the people were told, 'formerly they wanted a third of our country and we refused, which led to the last war; now they want the whole of Madagascar. It is the whole island they want to manage and govern. But I have refused and I informed you of this. They have taken away their flag; they have broken relations with our Government and they are gone. . . .'

PART III  
UNDER FRENCH RULE





## *Chapter I*

### THE CONQUEST

DIPLOMATS having failed to bring Queen and Prime Minister to accept the protectorate 'with all its consequences', guns were now to speak. What M. Baudais had urged thirteen years previously was now carried out. Terms were to be dictated by a victorious army—and this at Tananarive.

The means to do so were provided by the Chamber on 23rd November 1894, when, after a speech by the Foreign Minister, M. Hanotaux, a credit of 65 million francs was voted.

This time France had no need to fear any diplomatic complications with England. The free hand, given five years previously, now came in most usefully.

Like General Duchesne, who was appointed Commander-in-Chief, so also all his staff were men more or less experienced in colonial warfare, who were, therefore, all the more glad to have the benefit of M. Grandidier's experience. During several weeks this expert on the country and peoples of Madagascar daily held forth on ways and means how best to carry on warfare in Imerina.<sup>1</sup>

Before leaving Tananarive M. le Myre de Vilers had told the Prime Minister that until 25th December, when he would leave Tamatave, there was still a chance to ratify the project of the treaty, submitted to him with the ultimatum.

This offer having been refused, a state of war began. The Hova burned the property of a British subject, a native of Mauritius, who, in defending his home, was killed. His head was stuck up on a pole. Tamatave was taken by French troops from Reunion; the work was carried on at Diego Suarez. Majunga was bombarded and occupied. The Queen sent a proclamation to all Governors with full instructions what not to do and what to do 'until not one French soldier is left in Madagascar'. Her chief reliance for victory over the French

<sup>1</sup> A. Grandidier, *op. cit.* p. 76.

was plainly expressed in the preamble—namely her reliance upon the effect of fever.

In February 1895 the Queen called upon her people to fight a Holy War. On twelve sacred hills the red flag, signal of the call to arms for all reservists, was hoisted. For once native pastors and sorcerers were at one in assuring the Hova of divine protection—and of certain victory.

On 28th February General Metzinger landed in Majunga with the advance guard of the troops.

Alas, the rainy season was in full swing, and fever soon began to reap its deadly harvest.

In spite of experience, enthusiasm, zeal, and popularity, this campaign of March 1895 to September 30th is always spoken of as 'disastrous'. 'Never', so wrote one military man, 'has a small army been exposed to worse suffering.' An unfortunate combination of circumstances alone explains this tragedy.

Had the original plan been carried out and a small expeditionary force of seasoned men been sent to reach Tananarive by the paths the hundred Frenchmen had traversed successfully, those disasters might possibly have been avoided.

As the colonial troops at the disposal of the Ministry of the Colonies were not sufficient, and the majority of troops and supplies had to come from the Ministry of War, it was decided to give it the charge of the expedition. Public opinion, also, demanded that it should be a national affair. As so often, also now, the question of departmental rivalries, the desire to gain some glory, to get the chance of distinguishing oneself, came in. However, in order to avoid all semblance even of favouritism or partiality, the lot had to decide. It proved the lot of death for six thousand French mothers' sons; victims of that invisible, intangible foe—malaria.<sup>1</sup>

Twelve thousand men were to proceed to Tananarive from Majunga—but there was no road along which the transports could proceed. The ideal thing to do would have been to lay a two-foot-gauge railway line, but the distance of 400 kilometres to be covered made this impossible before the rains set in. This same cause ruled out using the river for removing

<sup>1</sup> According to General Duchesne's report the mortality was 33 per cent for the conscript army, and 15 per cent for the colonial troops—out of 5,756, seven only were killed, and 13 died of their wounds.

the troops from the deadly coast, as it was impossible to construct craft quickly enough. There was thus nothing left but to march on foot, mules and Lefevre carriages to serve as transport. These carriages had proved most useful during the campaign in Dahomey; but they presupposed a road. In this case they were to prove the undoing of the sappers.

The European troops, consisting of young men, had to make a road—but across what soil! General de Torcy, chief of staff, wrote: ‘Those devils of Hovas reckon evidently more on the difficulties of their country than on their bravery.’ The first part was through marshy land, the second, across the desert, 120–150 kilometres broad, and nothing in it but stones.

A road had to be made across the desert, which was like a sea of petrified waves; waves of rock or again of clay; there were sharp ridges, deep ravines, but no cultivation, and not one inhabitant. A desolate land, made worse by Hova tactics of fleeing before the enemy’s approach creating a void around it; deadly.

‘To make ten kilometres of road meant a displacement of 6,000 cubic metres of soil, and three kilometres a day was the utmost one could achieve—in this accursed country.’<sup>1</sup>

Would the bridge which the sappers had to build on piles beaten into almost bottomless bog soil bear the weight of 4,000 carriages? Mules and infantry could not move until the road was ready. It had to be made under the merciless rays of the sun. Physical fatigue, lack of moral resistance, and the absence of the stimulating element of danger, prepared a fruitful soil for the mosquito’s death-carrying sting.

If the expedition was to be saved, something, and that quickly, had to be done. It was therefore decided to form a flying column of 3,000 soldiers and twelve mountain guns to make a quick march of 200 kilometres, and to take Tananarive by assault. The situation had become so desperate that no hesitation was possible.

After five months of desperate, superhuman effort in a fight against nature, aggravated by avoidable mistakes, recognized too late to be rectified, General Duchesne and his staff set out for the heart of Madagascar.

<sup>1</sup> General de Torcy, MS. letters to his wife.

Resistance was expected, and, indeed, here and there some skirmishes were fought. Hova shells burst, but without doing any harm; bullets whistled, yet without killing.

The stiffest resistance encountered was between 26th and 30th September, when there was continual fighting. The quantity of munitions employed by the Hovas surprised the French, and the small number of wounded and killed was equally surprising. On 30th September the French bombarded the town, to prepare the assault. By a strategy unexpected by the Hovas, who believed the French troops to be retreating, the capital was soon at the mercy of the attackers. How urgent it was for them to take the city there and then, these alone knew. Only very few rounds were left per man, and food for one week! What if the Hova Government had to withdraw from Tananarive, and the city to be found foodless; perhaps to burst into flames as Moscow had done?

At the Observatory, which had been turned into a redoubt, now forsaken, Hotchkiss guns were found, but without the firing-cord. An officer's button hook did service, and the Hova guns, turned against Tananarive, joined in the bombardment. From the royal palace a large battery was firing volley upon volley, to which the French replied. Two melinite shells burst in the palace yard, whereupon the Prime Minister<sup>1</sup> at once ordered the white flag to be hoisted.

Very soon after, General Duchesne entered the city to dictate his terms, and the treaty was signed.

"The very day the troops entered the capital the British missionaries came to General Duchesne to assure him of their devotion, promising to do all they could to co-operate in the work of pacification and civilization, which France was going to undertake."<sup>2</sup>

In France it had been realized for some time that the Protestant missions,<sup>3</sup> being staffed by foreigners, were likely to create difficulties. Therefore, the very day the news of the taking of Tananarive reached Paris, the Directors of the Société des Missions Evangéliques de Paris felt it their duty to offer their

<sup>1</sup> Vassé, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Jean Bianquis, *op. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> The London Missionary Society (1818), the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (1864), the Friends' Foreign Missionary Association (1867), the Norwegian Lutheran Society (1886) (now American N.L.S.), the Paris Missionary Society (1896).

assistance. The Government, for its part, urged them to help in the francization of Madagascar.

The Queen and Prime Minister had had the surprise of their lives when they understood the full portent of the text of the treaty, and found themselves personally treated so utterly differently from what they had expected. Unfortunately, they at once took advantage of this leniency, and did not carry out what they had undertaken to do. The disbandment and disarmament of the army was more pretence than real, nor did they keep their promises to establish order and to create confidence.

The gravity of the situation was quickly realized by the Commander-in-Chief. What, after all, could 6,000 troops achieve in a country as vast as Madagascar, if a general insurrection were to break out? One had to rely on the honest co-operation of the Hova authorities.

The only thing to do was to remove the Prime Minister, as soon as a successor had been found. In default of a better man the Foreign Minister, Razanjy, was chosen. This done, the Prime Minister was informed one morning early, that he was to consider himself a prisoner and that he was to be taken to his son's house.

To his plea that he had not yet breakfasted, no heed was given. As he was, in slippers and dressing-gown, the mighty autocrat of Imerina left the palace.

Ranavalô III for her part, was asked to inform the Foreign Minister in the presence of the French officers, that she appointed him Prime Minister. The Queen seemed unmistakably pleased to have been delivered from her old and tyrannical husband. Her momentary fear, lest she had to become the wife of the new Prime Minister (her husband's senior by many years) had vanished when reassured by General Duchesne that this was not so. He had been rather at a loss to understand her extraordinarily bald words, till they had been explained to him. On the other hand, Rainilaiarivoly's successor was to be told equally plainly that for the Queen he was Prime Minister only and nothing else.

During two months quiet reigned, and all augured well; then, suddenly, disorder broke out, attacks and even assassinations being common occurrences. An English missionary

with wife and daughter was killed and Hova troops massacred.

These outbreaks having been quelled, there seemed to be a possibility for order to be established. General de Torcy wrote that the Malagasy were awaiting the new Resident, a civilian, with impatience, mixed with anxiety. 'They think he will get them out of the provisional stage and reorganize at once the principal services, of which that of finances is the most urgent.'

When M. Laroche arrived in Tananarive, General Duchesne left for France, General Voyron remained behind as Commander of the Forces

On 8th January 1896 the Queen signed a declaration 'that she was taking note of the declaration by the French Government, that it had taken possession of the island of Madagascar'. She accepted the conditions stipulated by the treaty. Henceforth the Resident was put in charge also of the interior administration of the kingdom. The Queen, for her part, undertook to carry out all reforms considered necessary by the protecting Power, which reserved to itself the right to maintain in Madagascar as many troops as were required for the exercise of its authority.

When appointing M. Laroche the Government had not taken into consideration the peculiarly Malagasy conception that Protestant was identical with British. When it became known that the new Resident was a Protestant, the Hovas began to wonder whether France had abdicated in favour of England.

Apparently things were getting on very well in Madagascar, but under the surface calm much unrest was secretly going on. False rumours were assiduously spread as to the intentions of the French, who were represented as going to take away the land from the people and to prohibit native customs from being followed out. Dissatisfaction was rapidly growing among certain tribes to the north-east of Imerina, who had expected to be delivered by the French from their enemies—the Hova governors, and their exactions. Nothing, however, was changed in the administration of the country.

A month had hardly passed since M. Laroche had arrived in Tananarive, when news reached the capital that a strong

band of Fahavalos<sup>1</sup> had made its appearance at a distance of six days' journey. The first comforting idea that these were but cattle robbers, was soon shattered, for the band consisted of former Hova soldiers who had kept their arms, and who were commanded by an ex-Governor, Rabezavana, and his blood-brother, Rabezona.

These two leaders openly proclaimed themselves in revolt against the French, as well as their intention to attack Tananarive. It was a declaration of war without mercy. Nor was this all; in the south-east of Imerina another party of Fahavalos killed five Europeans prospecting for gold; but the troops sent to chastise them could not catch the leaders.

Everywhere insurrection broke out; civilians, priests, even Hova officers sent to bring about order were massacred. Convoys were attacked and the carriers killed. In order to coerce the French to leave the country Tananarive was to be starved. The villagers were compelled to forsake their villages and seek refuge in the forest and bush; no sowing was tolerated. Famine was to be the ally of the insurgents.

While this was going on in Madagascar, feeling concerning that island was beginning to run high in Parliament, leading to heated debates. Every one wished to know whether Madagascar was still a Protectorate, or was it a French possession?

In June 1896 M. Hanotaux laid before the Chamber of Deputies the project for a law by which this question was to be settled.

As the reason for this step he mentioned that, although French troops had entered Tananarive eight months ago, the diplomatic and political régime of Madagascar had not yet been defined. This uncertainty was not only a drawback to the pacification of the country, but created problems of international importance. The Cabinet of M. Ribot had pronounced itself in favour of placing Madagascar under the Protectorate, but the succeeding Cabinet held other views, and as the first treaty had not yet been ratified, a new one was prepared, in which the 'Queen takes note that the French Government had taken possession of the island of Madagascar'.

This fact having been notified to the foreign Powers, there

<sup>1</sup> A tribe of thieves.



followed an exchange of views between Paris and those governments especially interested—namely Great Britain and the United States, owing to their treaties of 1881, signed between them and the Queen.

The sacrifices made by France in order to establish her authority in Madagascar made it imperative to assure to her subjects a privileged position. The Government wished to put an end to this uncertainty and to a condition of affairs which, by being dragged on, endangered the interests engaged in Madagascar, and the Minister asked the Chamber to declare by law that the island of Madagascar and the islands surrounding it, would henceforth be a French colony. This solution seemed to the Cabinet 'the most clear, most simple, most logical and the only one able to disperse the darkness which as yet envelopes the future of Madagascar'. The Foreign Minister further stated that, by declaring Madagascar a French colony, there would be no change of method in the internal administration of the country, nor any alteration in the status of the inhabitants of the island with regard to their laws, customs and local institutions. M. Hanotaux, however, added one point of primary importance—namely, 'that the authority of the native power will be made use of for the administration of the country. The Queen will keep, together with her title, all the honours it confers . . . but under the sovereignty of France. The same applies to the chiefs, with whose assistance we wish to administer those parts of the population which are not under Hova domination.'

The Chamber was asked to adopt the law, as explained by M. Hanotaux in these outlines, 'in order to put an immediate end to the uncertainty as to the nature and principles of the French establishment on the great African island and to regulate the economic régime for the new colony in the Indian Ocean'.

Intimately connected with this question was that of slavery, for according to the law of 1848 every slave who put foot on French territory was free. While some of the Deputies, especially those of the Extreme Left, demanded an immediate and total abolition, others urged a gradual process so as to prevent an economic crisis, by turning some 500,000 people

out of employment without making provision for their livelihood. For the owners it would be a loss of labour and of capital. The freed slaves, by joining the insurgents, might bring about a military crisis.

The debate ended in a victory for those who demanded the immediate emancipation—but unless Madagascar was declared French territory, there could be no abolition of slavery. On 20th June Madagascar was declared a French colony by a majority of 329 against 82.

While thus in France the fate of the great island and its people was settled, conditions in Imerina were getting worse and worse, intensified by certain of the conditions inherent in the system of this nominal Protectorate. 'Having neither political nor administrative powers, the officers were impotent to reorganize the occupied territories, while the scattered bands of insurgents reformed to begin their nefarious game at some other place.'<sup>1</sup>

To General Voyron it was evident that the directing power of insurrection was within the Queen's palace, although outwardly she showed herself most ready to carry out the suggestions made for the suppression of the revolt. Thus she had issued an order for all the inhabitants of Imerina to give up their arms, an order which remained a dead letter, as the Chiefs knew only too well that it had been given merely to hoodwink the French authorities.

However, letters from the ministers to the rebel chiefs found in abandoned villages, left no doubt as to the complicity and duplicity of the Queen's Government,<sup>2</sup> and that the secret headquarters of the insurgents were in the capital itself. General Voyron did not hesitate to accuse Razanjy, the Prime Minister, of being the instigator and leader of what he described

'as a vast conspiracy against the French authority, directed by a leading mind, supported in all its movements by persons connected with the Government. The only way to get at the guilty was an inquiry under the direction of a French judge. The General hoped that, even should Razanjy be cleared, yet the authors of all these troubles would be discovered, who had not only created anxiety in the town, but had covered the flourishing country with ruins.

<sup>1</sup> General Gallieni, *La Pacification de Madagascar*, par Capitain Hellot.

<sup>2</sup> Report by General Voyron to the Resident, 26th May 1896.

'It is high time to bring about calm in this troubled country, which can only be done by striking at the leaders of the insurrection.'

The Resident, however, would not act, because he put his full trust in the words of the Hova Government, and at the same time insisted that he must strictly adhere to the orders given him by the Foreign Minister, namely to leave the whole internal machinery of administration intact.

News of all this reached the exiled ex-Prime Minister in Algiers, where he was enjoying what he described as 'the gentle and generous hospitality of France'. It seemed to the fallen dictator that he was dreaming, for so extraordinarily pleasant was his existence as an honoured guest. Life was made comfortable to him, thanks to M. Vassé, his intendant.<sup>1</sup> During long hours, the old Hova would be telling him about what had happened during the thirty-odd years he had been Prime Minister and Royal Consort. His one regret seemed to be not to have been the favourite also of Ranavaloa I, as he had been of Rasoherina; not to speak of the two Queens, whose legal husband he had been.

When the *Depêche Algerienne* brought news that 'the disdain for the French troops in Tananarive is without bounds; that in the streets the people jostle even the superior officers', the exile explained that

'the only way to make an end of these vexations was to take the whip hand . . . the more of the people you kill, the quicker you will be secure. . . . If M. Laroche will listen to the protestations of the Queen, France is not at the end of her difficulties. The great men of my country should not be given handshakes, but cuts with the sword; but unfortunately M. Laroche has no sword.'

The ex-Prime Minister had suddenly come to realize that he had been deceived, that, after all, France was a great Power. He had fits of fury against England and all English people. He was like a man who, too late, perceived that he had put his money on the wrong horse. He craved passionately to use the influence he believed he still had in Madagascar, to help France. He begged to be permitted to go to Paris to see the President of the Republic, and to have a proclamation to

<sup>1</sup> He had already filled that position for the son of Abd-el Kader.

the Malagasy he had composed, posted in every village of Imerina.

This 'belated repentance' as his Intendant called it, was genuine. The exile was eagerly awaiting the reply from Paris, but before it could reach him he died unexpectedly.<sup>1</sup> His last advice concerning Madagascar affairs had been: 'You ought to expel the Queen from the island.'

Whether the ex-Prime Minister's political testament, as his proclamation was now considered, would have had a restraining influence on the rapidly spreading insurrection it is difficult to say.

By September 1896 there were six principal groups of insurgents converging towards Tananarive. Of arms there was no lack, ten thousand guns having been distributed among the rebels by an ex-Minister; the rest were armed with assegais and axes.

All Imerina was in revolt. Every night the sky was illuminated by burning churches and villages. On the outskirts of the capital French posts had been established, but the soldiers, exposed to perpetual surprise attacks, were getting exhausted by this kind of warfare; the unhealthy climate adding to their sufferings.

The troops had to be always on the move. General Voyron was getting more and more exasperated by this state of affairs, but the Resident still put his trust in the Queen's Government, which, in spite of all its promises, was apparently unable to stop the conflagration.

The French officials in the country, unable to carry on their duties, had been recalled. Colonists, prospectors, traders had been compelled to seek refuge in the capital, leaving their possessions to be pillaged. The non-French members of the foreign colony were scoffing.

Tananarive was like an island in a sea of fire, fanned by some occult power. The situation was becoming impossible. This the Government in Paris fully realized, but whom to send to quench these devouring flames of revolt, and to bring order out of anarchy—that was the question.

<sup>1</sup> He had made M. le Myre de Vilers executor of his wish for his body to be removed to Madagascar.

## *Chapter II*

### THE RIGHT MAN

As is often the case in crucial moments, the right man was found to be at hand. He was brought to the notice of the somewhat perplexed Colonial Minister by one of his friends. 'Send Colonel Gallieni to Madagascar,' this gentleman said, and then he proceeded to explain how he personally had come to know this officer through the letters of his friend, Major Lyautey, at that time in Tonking.

M. Leblond, the Colonial Minister, willingly read the letters his friend submitted to him, and certainly Colonel Gallieni seemed to be the very man he was looking for.

M. Leblond sent for him, and a very few days later decided to entrust him with the task of pacifying and of organizing Madagascar.

Colonel Gallieni was at the time a man forty-four years of age, and behind him lay a brilliant colonial career in the Soudan and in Tonking.

When quite a lad he had early made up his mind to become a soldier-explorer; possibly as the result of being the son of an officer and of reading books on voyages and conquests.

Life offered him in due time the opportunity to follow his inclination. As it happened, the last day of Joseph Gallieni's studies at St. Cyr coincided with the outbreak of the 1870-71 war. During this campaign he made friends with an English volunteer, Herbert Kitchener. Little did the two friends guess that they would both gain glory for their respective countries in colonial enterprises, and that towards the very end of their lives, hold simultaneously the post of Secretary of State, during the great war of 1914, and against the same enemy as in 1870.

In 1871 Sub-Lieutenant Gallieni, who belonged to the Colonial Infantry, was sent to the island of Reunion. Here he spent much time in study, a congenial activity for his type of mind, but life in an old colony could not satisfy the man of action. Therefore, as soon as he could do so, he requested to

be appointed to a regiment of Tirailleurs Senegalais, which he joined at Dakar in 1867.

In the colony of Senegal Gallieni's love of adventure found full satisfaction. To begin with, the Governor sent him on a mission to Gambia, and afterwards on another to reconnoitre the valley of the Niger, which meant having to cross the unexplored regions between the Senegal and that great river.

Gallieni set out, with four officers chosen by himself, on what was definitely meant to be a diplomatic, therefore a pacific, enterprise. In view of possible attacks, a sufficient quantity of cartridges was secreted in the cases of provisions. As events afterwards proved, it was due to this foresight that the five Europeans escaped from losing their lives.

Thirty spahis accompanied the mission in order to impress the natives by the beauty of their colourful uniforms, as well as to serve as guard of honour to the envoy of France.

The objective of the journey was to visit Sultan Ahmadou in Segou, his capital, situated on the Niger. This ruler had expressed willingness to be in amity with the French, whose outposts had as yet not advanced close to his realm.

Gallieni has described the experiences of this expedition in a book,<sup>1</sup> in which he also tells much of the people and their customs. He had unwanted leisure to do so, for the Frenchmen were not permitted to come as far as Segou, but were kept in what was virtual captivity, in a place not very far off. Ten months passed in vain correspondence and hopeless waiting; in hunger and illness; in complete inability to get into touch with Senegal. With death threatening almost daily, the situation was decidedly as dangerous as possible. Yet, in spite of every kind of handicap, Gallieni achieved that for which he had been sent out. He returned with a treaty duly signed by the Sultan of Segou, which granted all he had demanded. Gallieni's personality won the day.

The vast empire of the Toucouleurs was put under the protection of the French: 'from the sources of the Niger to Timbuctoo, in those parts where waters of that river bathe the possessions of the Sultan of Segou'.

The honour due to the leader of this successful expedition was generously awarded to him.

<sup>1</sup> Commandant Gallieni, *Voyages au Soudan Français*.

Gallieni was next sent to Martinique for three years. From here he was recalled to West Africa. The situation demanded a leader who knew the country and the people. The colony was threatened north, south and east by three native conquerors, one of whom, the fanatical Marabout Mahmadou Lamine, was aiming at creating a vast Mahometan empire. His followers were pillaging the country, while the Sultan of Segou was attacking friendly tribes, in spite of his professed friendship for the French.

In 1886 Lt.-Colonel Gallieni was entrusted with the superior command of the colony of the French Soudan, which had come into being as a result of his successful mission three years previously.

Once more Gallieni was successful in carrying out the task set before him. He made two expeditions, with the result that peace, security, and order were established.

Gallieni had carefully studied the principles and methods two great colonial leaders had set forth, but which were not generally acceptable in their day, to those in authority at home. The one was Maréchal Bugeaud, the conqueror of Algeria, who tried to revive the Roman practice of turning the soldiers into colonists, and of utilizing their professional qualifications, once the period of conquest was over.

His principle was 'that no occupation of a conquered country could be fruitful, unless it was followed by colonization, which, in its turn, is impossible without political domination'. That alone would permit gradual developments. Bugeaud was convinced that Africa would be the nursery of men fitted to command.

Gallieni's other model was General Faidherbe, who had developed the colony of Senegal. This great administrator believed in creating an atmosphere of mutual trust: a penetration of territories by means of pacific missions. Political rather than military action was to create a greater France in Africa.

Gallieni had made these different principles his own. He elaborated and tested them, adding his personal experiences to the maxims of the men he admired, and which expressed his personal ideal.

'As it happened he possessed those rare, but important qualities of leadership by which are conquered not only

countries, but also hearts. Whenever possible he avoided recourse to force, true to his belief that not one shot was worth firing unless on the morrow organization would follow, with whatever benefits our civilization has to offer. Gallieni at once commenced to improve the economic conditions of the natives. He took to heart the welfare of the populations brought into contact with French rule.<sup>1</sup>

The tribes were left under the rule of their own chiefs, who were guided and controlled by French officers. The natives loved Gallieni, for these poor pagan people had been living in terror of their Moslem neighbours, who pillaged their villages and made them slaves.

He also won the admiration of those whom he defeated by his fine understanding of their mentality and prejudices.

Within two years he had more than accomplished the task entrusted to him, for he laid also the basis for the administrative and financial policy of the French Soudan, which he had increased by 900,000 square kilometres, and by 2,600,000 inhabitants.<sup>2</sup>

Gallieni's next command from 1894 to 1895 was in Tonking, where bands of powerful pirate chiefs were infesting the territories bordering on China.

He discovered that the primary reason for which the population of those parts made common cause with the pirates was fear. Not possessing any arms, these cultivators of rice-fields had to choose between losing their lives and joining the pirates.

Gallieni lent the villagers arms, which were all carefully registered, and all trading in them was made impossible. Not only could the people defend themselves against attacks, but, thanks to greater security, the cultivation of rice could be carried on.

In Tonking, as in the Soudan, Gallieni succeeded to establish peace and security, by means of his approved method,<sup>3</sup> which he described as that 'of the drop of oil'. Yet he could not have accomplished all he did were it not for like-minded collaborators.

<sup>1</sup> Sonia E. Howe, *Lyautey of Morocco*. London, 1931.

<sup>2</sup> C. Blanchon, *Le Général Gallieni*.

<sup>3</sup> In the appendix to his book *Trois colonnes aux Tonkin*, Gallieni sets forth his method as successfully applied in Tonking and Madagascar. Any one wishing to study his method in detail should read these 'conclusions'.



His personality attracted men, and his method of colonial warfare appealed to their imagination. Gallieni won the whole-hearted co-operation of his subordinates because he gave them scope for the display of initiative, full liberty as to the means for accomplishing the desired end, and the consciousness of being alone responsible for the results to be achieved.

The non-commissioned officers, and even the Foreign Legionaries under his command, were given the opportunity to be collaborators in the organization of the recently pacified country.

This leader of men *knew* how to secure the voluntary participation of his men in the task to be accomplished; and they knew that he fully and duly appreciated their efforts—whether as teachers or as artisans.

Among Gallieni's ready supporters in his somewhat new methods of action was Hubert Lyautey, so famous later as 'Maker of Morocco'.<sup>1</sup>

In 1894 Major Lyautey had come to Tonking, a rather disillusioned man of forty, whose military career had been near being wrecked on the rocks of official disapproval.

An ardent believer in the beneficial moral action by the officers on their men, he had written an article, *Du rôle social de l'officier dans le service militaire*.<sup>2</sup> Although it had been published anonymously in *La Revue des Deux Mondes*, his authorship leaked out. His theories appeared subversive of discipline; his criticisms of the system in vogue were resented, and he fell into disfavour. An influential friend secured for Lyautey a temporary mission in Tonking, to permit this stir to be forgotten, as all nine days' wonders are. While in this honourable exile, Lyautey met Gallieni.

It may be said with truth that these two men 'discovered' each other to their mutual benefit. Gallieni recognized the latent qualities of leadership in the rather dandified, embittered officer of the home army, and gave him the opportunity of showing his mettle. Lyautey, on his part, at once hailed with enthusiasm a master-mind, whose disciple he was eager to become.

<sup>1</sup> Sonia E. Howe, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Lyautey, *Du rôle social de l'officier dans le service militaire*.

There was hardly one letter which Lyautey wrote to his friends at home without mentioning his hero, giving details of his methods both of warfare and of administration; of his comprehension of men, and of his power over hearts.

These letters<sup>1</sup> presented in glowing colours the moral portrait of Lt.-Colonel Gallieni, painted by the brush of an artist who, as the future proved, was himself also a leader of men, a creative organizer.

Such was the man whom the Minister of the Colonies invited to proceed to Madagascar as Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Occupation.

How Gallieni looked upon this invitation becomes evident from his own statement.<sup>2</sup>

'There are invitations which owing to the circumstances under which they are given, make a refusal impossible. I must, however, admit, that it was not with a light heart that I faced the heavy responsibilities entailed in that task. My experiences in the Soudan and Tonking had taught me the tremendous difficulties of those colonial enterprises where everything has to be created; where one has to carry on as best one can and that, invariably, without sufficient resources.'

What made the task before him somewhat less formidable was the fact that he was to have such far-reaching powers as to give him sole authority over both the military and the civil personnel serving in Madagascar.

To carry out the work entrusted to him, General Gallieni asked for, and secured as collaborators, six officers whose efficiency he had proved in his former campaigns. A great believer in the multitudinous qualifications of the heterogeneous elements of the Foreign Legion, he asked for a battalion, which would provide him not only with splendid soldiers, but with artisans, schoolmasters and even dramatic performers, necessary collaborators in the creation of a new social and economic life in a country waiting to be civilized, once organization had stepped into the place of military operations.

With regard to the appointment of Gallieni as Governor-General of Madagascar, the Colonial Minister made the

<sup>1</sup> Lyautey, H., *Lettres du Tonkin et de Madagascar*.

<sup>2</sup> General Gallieni, *Neuf ans à Madagascar*.

following statement in the Chamber, after explaining the actual conditions in that island:

'The Government, realizing the difficulties arising out of divided authority, had decided to create unity of command. To replace General Voyron, who has already asked some time ago to be relieved of his post, the Government has chosen an officer, who in the Soudan and recently in Tonking, has displayed such military, political and administrative gifts, that I feel justified in saying that he is one of the best and most useful servants of France. (Loud applause) I mean Colonel Gallieni.'

Time did not permit the newly appointed Governor-General to meet M. Alfred Grandidier, some of whose books on Madagascar he had read, and whose advice he felt might be of great assistance. He wrote to M. Grandidier:

'I am absolutely ignorant, Sir, of all that concerns Madagascar. Although I am starting out with the intention of devoting myself completely to my new mission, I am nevertheless rather nervous as to the results which I hope to attain. Your advice might have been a guide in the task entrusted to me. . . .'<sup>1</sup>

On 9th August 1896 General Gallieni left Marseilles for Madagascar, on the *Tang-tse*, where he touched land at Majunga. Next the steamer stopped at Nossi Bé, that island on which Colonel Hunt had hoped to establish a flourishing British colony. Next Cap Ambre was doubled, a manœuvre which four centuries previously Tristan da Cunha and the great d'Albouquerque had vainly tried to carry out. Then it was the turn of the General to land on the shores of that large and beautiful bay where 200 years earlier his compatriot, the gallant pirate Misson, had built his city of Libertatis.

Leaving the bay of Diego Suarez, the steamer passed that of Antongil, where so many early pioneers had lost their lives in vain attempts at colonization and conquest. The next halt was made on that former stronghold of international pirates, the Ile de Ste Marie, the gift of Queen Beti to France. At last Tamatave was reached, haunted by the shades of Jean René and Radama I, who, in this very place, had been told by the envoy of the British Governor of Mauritius to assume the title of King of Madagascar.

<sup>1</sup> Gallieni, *Lettres de Madagascar* 1896-1905.

It was almost a pity that the Bay of St. Augustine and Port Dauphin were not ports of call for the *Yang-tse*, as then the General would have visited also those two places where the first attempts at colonizing Madagascar had been made, only to end in disaster. For all those who in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had put their faith in it as a possession worth having, it had proved an island of unfulfilled expectations. It was that still at the very moment when General Gallieni was landing on its soil. Would he succeed in making of the great island on the route to India what a Boothby, a Hunt, a Flacourt, a Valigny, a Maudave, a Benyowsky, a Cossigny had so firmly believed it should become? All they had left behind were some books considered valuable, because old and rare, treasures of famous libraries; as well as numberless faded leaves of memoranda filling dust-covered boxes in the archives of the Colonial Office in Paris.

At that time General Gallieni did not know as yet what was contained in these documents of schemes for the economic development, for strategic purposes, for commercial possibilities, so persistently brought before the French Government till a century before he was starting for Madagascar. Yet the task he had been sent to accomplish meant carrying out these very same schemes.

The means to do so were at his disposal: the support of the home Government; sufficient credits; an army of trained troops, efficient collaborators; a staff of scientific and medical men; experienced local advisers; many men ready to become colonists; prospectors eager to discover mineral wealth; financiers anxious to invest their money in great enterprises.

Weighing in the scales against these assets were the facts of Imerina being ablaze with revolt and the island as yet being largely unknown.

Thus, before its riches could be tapped, its resources put to profitable use, he would have to create the conditions permitting colonization and exploration; namely security for life and property. In order to attain this, General Gallieni set himself a threefold objective: the pacification of Imerina; the abolition of the Hova hegemony; the submission of all the independent tribes to French authority.

The General had no illusions whatever as to the greatness of

the obstacles before him; but he did not consider the difficulties which would face him to be insurmountable, once his approved method was applied by collaborators, in whose loyalty and capabilities he had unlimited faith.

It was in this frame of mind that he started from Tamatave for Tananarive—travelling in the same fashion, as, a hundred years earlier, the first European traders to visit Imerina had done. Carried in a filanzane along the narrow, winding path, uphill, downhill, across marshland, and through forests, he at last beheld Tananarive, perched on the crest of a high hill, dominating a vast plain.

The officers of General Voyron's staff, who had come out to meet the new Commander, gave him a warm welcome. They pointed out to him the principal buildings, their silhouettes boldly outlined against the sky: the imposing palace of the Queen, the Anglican church; the quarter inhabited by the British colony, the dwellings partly hidden in a mass of verdure and of flowers. The red houses of the city seemed to cling to the rocks. A fascinating sight and a beautiful outer aspect met General Gallieni's gaze; but within—what would he find?

During the few days before General Voyron left Tananarive, he imparted much valuable information to his successor, whose chief he had been in the Soudan and Tonking. It was of tremendous help to General Gallieni to be introduced to the situation by a man whom he loved and respected.

With the exception of a zone some twenty to twenty-five kilometres around the capital, the whole centre of the island was in open revolt. The only route of communication to the coast, that to Tamatave, was made insecure by attacks on the bearers, whom the insurgents terrorized, to prevent them bringing provisions to the capital, in which there was food but for one month. There was one telegraph line only, perpetually interfered with, requiring repairs to be carried out at great risk. Postal communications to Tamatave took ten to twelve days; the routes in other directions were quite irregular, the messengers being frequently massacred. On the east coast, the formerly friendly tribes, disgusted at French non-intervention on their behalf, had been compelled to make common cause with their foes—the Hovas. On the west coast anarchy reigned.

Among the Europeans in Tananarive there was dissatisfaction, due to the high cost of living, to the shortage of food, and to the impossibility of getting goods up from Tamatave.

There was restlessness among the humble native inhabitants; a sullen anger, smouldering hatred among the nobles, who could not forgive the loss of their slaves. There were strained relations between the adherents of the two Christian communities; the insurgents hated all Christians alike. Such were the conditions when Gallieni took the reins of rule in his hands.

The first person to deal with was the Queen, whom he wished to impress with the fact that the authority of France was henceforth supreme. He therefore informed her that he would receive her at the Residency with the ceremonial 'due to a subject of France'.

She duly appeared, accompanied by her courtiers. The General addressed her as follows:<sup>1</sup>

'In order that there may be no doubt left in your mind or in that of your people of Imerina, this fact has to be grasped. The island of Madagascar is now a French colony, and the people inhabiting it have become French subjects. The French flag is the only one which may henceforth float over even the smallest village of the great island.

'This point made clear, I have the pleasure to announce to your Majesty that my instructions are to treat the Malagasy people with the utmost goodwill as a father treats his children, with gentleness and kindness, keeping his severity for those only who, obdurate by your counsel, dare to revolt against the authority which I represent.

'I know the love which your people bear you and the prestige of your dignity and your great intelligence, and your virtues will be followed by your subjects.'

The next day he paid the Queen a State visit, during which he informed her that the flag of Imerina was to be lowered everywhere; the tricolour of France to take its place; also, that henceforth she could no longer style herself Queen of Madagascar, but merely 'Queen of Imerina'; and 'would she kindly abstain from communicating with any officials, outside her realm'.

A few days after his arrival, the General called a meeting of

<sup>1</sup> *Bulletin du Comité de l'Afrique Française*, 1896, p. 385.

the Ministers. He let them see that he was not ignorant of their complicity in the rebellion. He told them in a few plain words that if they would whole-heartedly serve the French authority, he would overlook the past; but that, just as he was ready to recognize faithful service, just as certainly would he punish every act of hostility.

This appeal had no result and things went from bad to worse; the insurgents sending their scouts right into the suburbs to kill and to set fire to buildings.

He therefore considered it necessary to send away most of the entourage of the Queen, with the exception of one man, Rasangy, who, according to the proofs General Voyron had, had been the main instigator of the insurrection, yet who had been the only one to make his unconditional submission, being ready to become a tool in the hand of the new Power, whom, as time proved, he faithfully served.

From among the French officials of the departments of public works, education, and of agriculture who, owing to the insurrection, were in the capital, because unable to carry out their functions in the country, he chose those he wished to have for his collaborators. He told them what lines they were to follow, and that more helpers would soon be sent out from France and from Tonking.

In his letters to his friends General Gallieni made no secret of the tremendously difficult task set him, 'but', so he wrote,<sup>1</sup> 'once Fate has flung me here, I mean to devote myself to it with energy in order to win the game I am playing. I study the situation, I look for means to ameliorate it without troubling too much about instructions and orders; otherwise I would never achieve anything'. The first week he did nothing but listen and learn; one of the first things he did was to reinforce the Intelligence Department of the General Staff. From these officers he gathered the information he required before he could lay down his line of conduct. He fully realized that he would make enemies in many quarters, for so he wrote:

'My programme is to francisize Madagascar, to suppress English influence, and to humble the pride and the powers of the Hovas. I will act with all possible discretion and I will keep within the limits of legality and of right, but I shall

<sup>1</sup> *Lettres*, op. cit.

certainly offend convictions, hurt interests and beat against positions gained. Yet were I to take every recrimination into consideration, every complaint, I should have to remain in a dangerous state of inertia. All I must do is to act in good faith, but to alter my line of conduct is quite out of the question.<sup>1</sup>

The interests at stake were too great for personal considerations to come into question. His sphere of immediate authority, Imerina, was a country of 25,000 square kilometres, inhabited by one million people, the other million and a half being sparsely scattered over the rest of the island, itself as large as France, Belgium and Holland put together.

Among one of the first problems to be solved at once was that of the freed slaves, who, after the first outburst of joy, began to be very worried as to how they would exist and provide for their families. The General saw no other way, if complications of a serious nature were to be avoided, than to permit the ex-slaves to remain with their former masters, but as free servants.

By this wise measure he won the allegiance of these freed men, many of whom became useful servants of the Government; some by joining the regiment formed of natives, others as porters to provision the capital. A nucleus of genuinely loyal men had thus been created, on whom the General greatly reckoned as means for quelling the insurrection.

With regard to the military situation, an order by the Governor declared all Imerina and the country of the Betsileo, military territory, and to be under martial law.

In order to abolish Hova hegemony among the vassal tribes, he recalled all the Hova Governors, who were to be replaced by local chiefs, chosen by the tribesmen; a policy which he had found answer admirably in Tonking. This 'policy of races', he expected to have similar good results in Madagascar.

He felt that once Imerina came to form part of the colonial domain of France, its role as the centre of the nominal monarchy would lose its importance. Here, too, the rivalry between foreign influences had been centred, its consequences making themselves felt throughout the island.

<sup>1</sup> Gallieni, *Lettres*.



General Gallieni mentioned another difficulty: 'There is also the English question. The British colony is systematically ignoring the diplomatic arrangements and remains hostile, ready to seize every occasion for giving vent to its bad humour in the sphere of commerce, and, among others also, in that of religion.'<sup>1</sup>

He did not think it extraordinary that such animosity should exist. All that he could hope for was gradually to win over those foreign elements which cared genuinely for the welfare of the Malagasy, as he himself did. It was merely the inevitable clash between French power and British influence, the latter so firmly established by means of the privileged position of the English missionaries, and by the fact that practically every Hova Government official had been taught in their schools.

The General found Imerina 'Hova and English'; he meant to make it French. A few months later he wrote:

'As far as the natives are concerned things are getting on fairly well. The English are my great worry. In London, quite possibly, arms have been laid down, but out here there is no disarming, and, in spite of their assurances to the contrary, they try to retain their political influence over the Hova, who, in any case, believe that our domination is ephemeral. The people argue that this must be so, as the English have the greatest number of schools and of churches, of concessions of every kind, and this, not only in the towns, but in the whole island.'<sup>2</sup>

'The most effective means by which to francize the country and to break from the hegemony of British influence is to make French a compulsory subject in all schools, under threat of having them otherwise closed.'

Up to then 93 per cent of the commerce was in English, German, and American hands; henceforth, however, France was to be not merely one of the favoured nations, but the chief nation. Naturally, anger and recrimination were rife. He sympathized and understood the cause, but carried out his plans.

He had been given a task to fulfil—to make Madagascar in reality what it had become politically—a French colony. The obstacles were great, but he headed straight for the goal. To a friend he wrote:

<sup>1</sup> General de Madagascar, *Rapports*, 1899.

<sup>2</sup> *Lettres*, op. cit.

'I do not trouble either about texts, or regulations. . . . If my actions are not approved I shall resign, but I consider that during these present circumstances I cannot be bound by formalities, which only keep back and hinder everything. Unless I am given liberty, I would sooner pass this job on to some one else. I do not know how long I shall be left here, but if I am left to my own devices, the situation ought to become good within a year or two from now.'<sup>1</sup>

At the moment the situation was critical, the chief difficulties being those created by the Ministers of the Queen. The General felt that exceptional circumstances demanded exceptional measures. The length of time it took to communicate with Paris and to get a reply made it impossible for him to consult the Minister before acting, when immediate action seemed to be the only way out of a desperate situation.

Two weeks only had passed since his arrival in Tananarive when just such an occasion arose. What General Voyron had not been able to make the Resident do, that General Gallieni could do—namely, strike at the heads of the conspiracy. There was no shadow of doubt who the guilty were; he therefore asked the Prime Minister to resign. The Minister of the Interior and an uncle of the Queen were tried before a court martial. Convicted of treason, both were shot;<sup>2</sup> the uncle having tried in vain to bargain for his life by offering to become a Roman Catholic.

This apparently strange request was typical of the general attitude. By changing his religion he believed he would at once become a *persona grata* with the French Governor-General. Alas, justice could not be influenced by such an offer, and the lesson taught by the execution of these powerful officials was taken to heart; at least by some.

One of the Queen's aunts, a most active enemy, wielding far-reaching influence, was banished to the Ile de Ste Marie, while one of her uncles and three other high officials were sent into exile in Reunion.

Other courtiers, as also the Queen's Special Corps of Officers, Gallieni sent out into the surrounding districts with orders to recall the inhabitants to their villages, under threat that they

<sup>1</sup> *Lettres*, op. cit. p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Gallieni, *Lettres*, op. cit.

and their families would be held responsible should any new trouble break out.

It was with no light heart that the Governor-General let a 'heavy hand' be felt, but his drastic measures had sufficient result to justify them, for around Tananarive an immediate improvement made itself felt. The general situation, however, was as yet far from satisfactory, and convoys were still being attacked.

To him the pacification of Imerina was of primary importance. He therefore concentrated all available troops on this task, leaving at the coast and the Betsileo only just sufficient soldiers to ensure the safety of the Europeans. From Majunga he drew a company of marines; from Diego Suarez and Tamatave two companies of Senegalese. From Reunion one hundred troops were sent him by permission of the Minister; and then there was the battalion of his dear Foreign Legionaries.

Together with the troops already in Imerina, the total amounted to 12,000, of which 2,000 were Europeans, 10,000 natives (Senegalese, Hausa, Malagasy).

Gallieni divided Imerina into four military circles, which corresponded as much as possible to the area of the provinces. Two circles were added—comprising the country of the Sihanakas and the Bezanozano region.<sup>1</sup> The circles in Imerina were: of Arivonimama, Ambohidratino, of Ambohidrabiby, and of Ambatomanga. The capital and a region of 20 kilometres around it formed a military entity in itself—the Government of Tananarive, which was thus a ring within a chain of circles, each one under a superior commanding officer.

The line of communication to the east coast was protected by a series of blockhouses, from which to penetrate into the forest; there to create a second line of posts, in order to keep the rebel bands at a distance, and put an end to the attacks on convoys, and raids on the villages situated along this route. The road to Majunga was temporarily abandoned. All the transport of provisions was thus limited to a mule track General Voyron had made along the original path which was not adapted to animal transport.

<sup>1</sup> *La Pacification de Madagascar*, Capitain F. Hellot.

The military occupation began at a distance of 20 kilometres by posts, which were to form bases whence to carry on a methodical and progressive occupation of the country, to proceed 'by bounds', continually enlarging the sphere of the occupied zone, pushing the rebels towards the frontiers of Imerina.

There was to be at the same time a constant linking up of the military operations of each circle with those adjoining it. Behind the advancing front there were at once constituted posts, manned by militia; behind them 'armed' villages, whose inhabitants, having made their submission, were given arms, under the control of the French authorities. Great watchfulness had to be exercised in the zones between the military posts and these villages in order to prevent any infiltration of rebel bands.

From the political and administrative points of view the duties of the officers commanding these circles were:<sup>1</sup> 'to organize the pacified zones by recalling the population of their villages, to encourage them at once to cultivate their land, to organize markets and open schools' while protecting the people from raids of the Fahavalos.

To make the control easier, the military circles were subdivided into sections, all to be run on exactly the same principles. On the other hand, where conditions permitted, in order to economize in personnel, to form these circles into military territories: a process which General Gallieni directed as seemed advisable.

While driving out the rebels and getting the submission of the peaceful, but terrorized, inhabitants, the officers were to come into living contact with the population; the mentality of the natives was to be studied, and, by attempting to provide for their material needs, to win it by goodwill and persuasion, so as to make the new domination acceptable. To do this, much sympathy and understanding were required. In fact the officers were always to bear in mind that:

'It was not a war they were waging, but that their object was the pacification of a country in insurrection. The troops, as they passed the villages, were to leave behind in the minds of the inhabitants the memory of a just and

<sup>1</sup> Gallieni, Appendix, *Neuf Ans*, op. cit. p. 325.

indulgent power, to which to submit would be to their own benefit.

'The door for voluntary submission was always to be kept open, and those who came were to be well treated. To fire on any one fleeing was absolutely forbidden, as, possibly, fleeing because being afraid, rather than hostile.'

Apart from quelling the insurrection, there was to be an immediate substitution of order for anarchy; thus an end was to be made of feuds between villages. The administrator had to take the needs of the different tribes into consideration, and, as circumstances might demand, apply principles rather than rules.

The misled masses were to be won by friendliness, the doubtful elements, consisting of the lower officials, to be won by 'a discreet appeal to their ambition', while the leaders of the rebellion were to be pursued and punished; for then only could there be real pacification.

If these were General Gallieni's principles, they did not exclude a wise application of clemency, even to the apparently most obdurate foe, once it became evident that he was beginning to contemplate surrender. The genuineness of the surrender of a chief was to be put to the test by demanding of him to use his influence to bring about a general surrender of all those he had been leading to rebellion.

Under Hova rule, Madagascar consisted of four types of territories: (1) the sovereign territory of Imerina sub-divided into provinces; (2) vassal countries under Hova hegemony—the Betsileo and part of the east coast; (3) territories whose inhabitants paid a nominal tribute; (4) independent territories—such as those of the Sakalava and others.

The first phase of the pacification had been limited to Imerina and the Betsileo. The fact that General Gallieni had at once declared them military territory in a state of siege enabled the military to use energetic and rapid means, and to counteract any intrigues by foreign elements. Indeed, the Indian traders proved themselves bitter foes of the French authorities, trying everywhere to stir, or to keep up, the flames of insurrection, secretly supplying the insurgents with weapons.

If these Indians had been the only persons to do so, the work

of pacification might have proceeded even more rapidly than it was progressing, but moral and military support was given to the insurgents by those in authority—even to the Queen herself.

What General Voyron had firmly believed was proved to be true beyond all doubt. The culpability of the Hova Government was plainly stated in a proclamation, in which Rabezavana informed the people that he had a letter from the Queen and from the Prime Minister. The Queen wrote:

‘This is not a war of bandits, but a real war, made by the Government. It is I, Ranavalomanjaka who say it. All those who do not take part in it are guilty, and shall be deprived of their possessions by the people and by me, for I consider them friends of the French.’<sup>1</sup>

Another letter, dated somewhat earlier than this proclamation, announced the arrival of two officials to tell those to whom the letter was addressed the orders of the Queen, and to gather the people into a new army ‘to serve the Queen’.

In view of these facts, the moment had come to carry out the threats made to the Ministers—namely to punish the guilty. The only radical way for quelling the insurrection was by striking at its heads; by making a complete and radical end of the Hova hegemony. The guiltiest of the guilty was undoubtedly the Queen.

General Gallieni therefore decided to compel her to abdicate, although he fully realized that such an act might have most undesirable repercussions in the country, as loyalty to the Throne was one of the strongest sentiments among the Hovas. He therefore consulted the commanding officers of the circles as to what they believed the immediate effect would be were he to exile the Queen. Opinions were divided; but the General felt that her presence in Tananarive had a baneful influence. While outwardly appearing a most obliging and innocuous personage, it was nevertheless she who was keeping up the insurrection.

There was no choice left but to cut the Gordian knot by making an end of the monarchy. He told this decision only to three officers of his immediate surrounding. To the officers stationed between Tananarive and Tamatave he gave orders

<sup>1</sup> Louis Brunet, *L'œuvre de la France à Madagascar*, Paris 1903.

to hurry up the suppression of the insurrection in those parts. He also gave orders for the cruiser *La Prouse* to hold itself in readiness in the harbour of Tamatave.

To a friend in France, the General wrote on the eve of his *coup d'état*:<sup>1</sup>

'I have decided to finish with the Queen, as it is impossible for the principal noble families and the leaders of the insurrection to adapt themselves to the actual state of affairs. In their conversations, in gatherings, they pretend to be acting in the name of the oppressed Queens, showing each other certain documents bearing her seal. The working people and the former slaves on which I reckon most, are unable to understand our attitude, and therefore do not dare to rally openly around us. Ranavalona, for her part, finds it difficult to forget her former grandeur. She willingly lends an ear to those who regret it as much as she. Rumours are rife of a new revolution. I have therefore decided to invite the Queen to surrender her functions and to proceed to Reunion. I shall suppress the office of the Prime Minister and I will nominate Rasanjy Governor of Imerina under our control. It will then be easy to carry out the pacification of the country.'

The secret had been well kept; everything was carried out according to plan: no violence was used; no blood was shed; tears—yes.

At eight p.m. Colonel Gerard, Chief of Staff, attended by Rasanjy as interpreter, asked to be received by Her Majesty, who was completely taken by surprise. In polite terms she was informed of General Gallieni's decision; that she was to be exiled to the Island of Reunion.<sup>2</sup> Certain of her special friends were to accompany her.

After the first shock of this absolutely unforeseen ultimatum, the Queen, realizing the uselessness of resistance, accepted her fate with better grace than had been anticipated. She was told that at midnight the departure would take place, and that she was free to take all her personal effects with her.

<sup>1</sup> Gallieni, *Lettres*, 27th February 1897.

<sup>2</sup> She was granted an annual pension of 24,000 francs, and two years later she was permitted to settle in Algiers, where she remained until her death. The author has met several people who had danced with the ex-Queen, or had sung hymns with her.

Once the decision accepted, Ranavalo III supervised the packing of her things, evidently quite interested in the proceedings and in the anticipation of seeing a new country. However, the reality of her loss became evident at the moment when she was politely informed that she could not take her crown with her.

One ponders whether the Queen remembered at this juncture that incident after her coronation, when the crown fell from her head.

In the silence of the night this first 'Queen of Imerina', who was also the last Queen of Madagascar, left the city of her ancestors. She was carried to the east in the filanzane.<sup>1</sup> the Emperor Napoleon III had sent as a present to Radama II. *Sic transit gloria mundi!*

<sup>1</sup> At present the Queen's palace in Tananarive serves as a museum where the filanzanes of the various rulers are to be seen. What impressed the author was the simplicity of Radama I's filanzane—just suitable for a warrior—and the increasing elegance of the filanzanes used by the various queens. Marvellous, costly robes and mantles, sent to the rulers of Madagascar by English and French sovereigns, make the former grandeur of the Hova rulers very actual.



### *Chapter III*

#### THE RESTORATION OF ORDER

THE next morning the inhabitants of Tananarive found a large proclamation affixed everywhere. They stopped, and those who could read gasped, and sadly drew their own conclusions. There was no doubt possible as to whence the wind blew—the Queen—departed! No, there could no longer be any resistance to the French authorities once the Queen, their all-powerful sovereign, had meekly departed, leaving her devoted subjects without one word!

Those who could read, read the proclamation aloud. Addressed to ‘The inhabitants of Tananarive’, the Governor-General spoke to them in straight and unequivocal words. The proclamation began thus:

‘Since the Government of the Republic has declared Madagascar a French colony Royalty has lost its use in Imerina. I have therefore invited the Queen to resign her functions, and at her request. [Did the General smile as he penned this diplomatic inaccuracy?] I have permitted her to retire to the island of Reunion, where she will enjoy the most generous hospitality of the French authorities. France is henceforth the only Sovereign of Madagascar. She brings you civilization and she will do her best to introduce among you the principles which govern her . . . justice, peace, and equality for all. . . .’

General Gallieni reminded the people of what had been done, in those few months since his arrival, in fulfilment of the promises made since his arrival. He appealed to the Hovas to assist him in the great work of pacification; he begged them to shut their ears to lying rumours; but, instead, to go to the officers, missionaries, and colonists for sound advice. The Republic, considering the peoples of Madagascar as her children, could be trusted to have no intention whatever of depriving them of their possessions, which she would respect as much as their laws and customs. All France

desired was to let the Malagasy share in the blessings of her civilization.

The next part of the proclamation was of a more personal nature. General Gallieni assured the people that he would be always guided by justice. Those who would prove themselves loyal and obedient subjects of France would meet with goodwill only; the others, however high their rank, were to expect the severest chastisement.

The long and weighty document concluded with these words: 'Listen well to my words. Five months you have seen me at work. You know that what I say, I will do.'<sup>1</sup>

In France voices were raised against the deposition of the Queen, but General Gallieni had no cause to regret this drastic measure. The immediate results were proof positive of its wisdom and efficacy.

The masses of the people were convinced that Hova rule had come to an end, and that the authority of France was firmly established. Those driven into insurrection by the powerful leaders willingly returned to their villages, grateful to be able to do so, sure of good treatment and of assistance in their sore plight.<sup>2</sup>

By 1st March 1897, thus six months after his arrival in Madagascar, General Gallieni had successfully carried out one part of the task set him by the Government. The Hova hegemony was destroyed; French authority had been firmly established in the centre of the country; communication had been assured between the capital and the ports of Tamatave and Majunga, and with Fianarantsoa, the capital of the Betsileo, which was for that vast territory what Tananarive was for Imerina; even to its commanding situation on the top of a hill.

He had carried out his policy to offer the hand of peace to those who were timid and frightened, and it had brought forth its fruit. Through his collaborators, he had encouraged them in their good intentions, and had let them have a foretaste of the good things France had in store for them once civilization was introduced. The country, however, was not yet fully pacified, so long as the rebel chiefs were persisting in carrying

<sup>1</sup> *Fait à Tananarive le 28 Janvier 1890.* Le Resident General Gallieni.

<sup>2</sup> During the month of January some 60,000 persons had already returned, and their experience was a pledge for these others.

on their tactics of terrorizing the peaceful inhabitants, compelling them to forsake their villages, in order to create a void around the French officers, sent out to pacify that part of the country.

It was high time to get even with Rabezavana, this former Government official and inveterate rebel. Once he and his blood-brother Rabezona had made their submission, the end of strife would be in view. Colonel Combes had been hard in pursuit of Rabezavana, whose tactics—to vanish and not to come face to face with his pursuers—were exceedingly wearying and trying.

For reasons of health the Colonel asked to be relieved of his post, much to his regret, as the submission of Rabezavana seemed but a question of a few weeks. The officer to replace Colonel Combes was General Gallieni's admirer and friend, Commandant Lyautey.

When General Gallieni left Tonking it had been arranged between him and Lyautey that, as soon as there was a possibility of co-operation, the latter would join his chief.

Having left Tonking as soon as the rules of service permitted it, Lyautey had started for Madagascar, arriving in Tananarive three days after the Queen had left her capital.

Accompanied by ten other officers, chosen for their special qualifications, some from Tonking, others from France picked up at Suez, Commandant Lyautey had landed in Tamatave, having stopped at Majunga on the way. Here the first impression of Madagascar had been pleasant, but best of all it was to hear every one, civil and military, express their confidence in his friend. There was but one regret, namely, that General Gallieni had not been sent out six months earlier, as then the worst might have been avoided. To his friends, Lyautey wrote<sup>1</sup>:

'I am told that as it is, these six months with their mistakes, precedents created, fluctuations and hesitations by the authorities, will leave a deep mark, and more than six months will be required to climb up the hill. . . . There is a general fear that Gallieni, tired and overworked, might be compelled to leave before he has achieved his task. The situation is still very grave, although he is the master of all Imerina.'

<sup>1</sup> Lyautey, *Lettres du Tonkin et de Madagascar*, p. 489.

What he believed to be the mentality of his compatriots made Lyautey express fear lest, once it became known that the ground had to be regained bit by bit, public opinion in France might turn against his beloved chief.

‘Everything was believed to be lost under Laroche, and everything is expected to be won by the mere fact that Gallieni is there in his stead. There are supermen, but there are no sorcerers. Gallieni is no sorcerer . . . but Ministers and Parliament . . . want such.’<sup>1</sup>

Even if Gallieni were no sorcerer, he was, however, a man of great gifts, a leader of men, who knew how to select his collaborators, to whom he ungrudgingly awarded the honour due to them. They, for their part, loved him. They knew that under his somewhat stern exterior, due to great reserve, was a rich, noble, and generous nature; a warm heart and a character devoid of all harshness. His personality radiated a gentleness and strength. ‘It conveyed the impression of a perfect balance, of well-controlled energy, of resolution and tenacity, of thought and authority.’ Lyautey recognized the fact that his leader had the flair for discovering talents, and then gave them the opportunity to develop these by means of responsibility, and the free play of initiative.

‘Colonies are made by men,’ he wrote, ‘and these one takes where one finds them; but they are not as common as one is apt to imagine.’<sup>2</sup>

In his letters from Madagascar, Commandant Lyautey gave to his friends at home a vivid picture of all that happened in the country, which, five months before ablaze with anarchy, was now already pacified to a great extent.

What a power the personality of General Gallieni had on the masses Lyautey had at once occasion to witness. He saw ‘the people of Tananarive stooping low, forming a living hedge, every one hat off, begging for a look, as Gallieni passed by, the personification of sovereign power and of crushing force, a sight impossible to picture, unless witnessed.’<sup>3</sup> The General, by apparent sternness, had to undo the impression created by his predecessor’s weakness, that hats need not to be raised in token of respect. If the Governor-General rode by without so much

<sup>1</sup> Lyautey, *op. cit.* p. 512.

<sup>2</sup> Gallieni, *Lettres*, p. 97.

<sup>3</sup> Lyautey, *op. cit.* p. 526.

as giving a glance, it was merely because he was as yet having to impress on the Hovas that he was the representative of France, and as such in place of their sovereign. Hats had been pulled off before her; therefore, also, it had to be done before him.

It was a source of satisfaction to General Gallieni to receive a cablegram from the Minister of the Colonies to inform him that 'after a short discussion the Chamber of Deputies had unanimously passed a vote approving the policy he had carried out in Madagascar, and addressing its patriotic felicitations to the army which is assuring the pacification of the new French soil'.<sup>1</sup>

A few days after his arrival, Commandant Lyautey had proceeded to the district where chase was being made after Rabezavana. The policy pursued to catch the most elusive of antagonists was to encircle him, whereby he had been gradually pushed farther and farther, till he had withdrawn into a fertile region, into which no one had as yet penetrated. Here the last resources of the insurgents were stored.

The usual tactics employed by Rabezavana had been those of ambush; of a desperate guerrilla warfare. Thanks to his excellent intelligence service, the approach of the French troops was always known. This kind of warfare would have caused great inconvenience to the small groups of soldiers 'had the courage of the rebels been as great as their mobility. But the fear of coming into direct contact with the troops, the terror of the bayonet, made them flee, as soon as a march was made on them.'<sup>2</sup>

Six weeks after Lyautey had taken the command of the operations against Rabezavana, he learnt that the great rebel had come to the end of his powers of resistance, his followers forsaking him *en masse*. The psychological moment had come for entering into negotiations, so as to get a voluntary submission.

If there is a certain monotony in the process of pacification, the submission of Rabezavana gave the dramatic touch. Lyautey, in his letters, supplies the setting of a typically Madagascar scene; namely, the taking of three thousand oxen at one time; of coming upon a hidden village, the headquarters of Rabezavana. The bird had flown, but what did he not leave

<sup>1</sup> 4th April 1890.

<sup>2</sup> *La Pacification de Madagascar*, op. cit.

behind? Enormous provisions of rice (most welcome for Lyautey's troops) jewels, guns, cartridges, musical instruments (even violins); a large trunk containing the official uniform of this former Governor; an embroidered red costume, a general's hat with the white feathers.

Some hundreds of prisoners were brought to Lyautey, among them Rabezavana's mother. And then, oh joy, came news that the chief was willing to make his submission; on condition that his life was spared. This he was granted. Lyautey could hardly believe this submission possible. He kept the news secret, but he dictated to his interpreter-secretary a message to be flashed by heliograph to General Gallieni, once the submission had actually taken place. The young man gasped as he took down the words: 'Did you say Rabezavana?' 'Yes.' 'But then the insurrection is over?' 'That is so.'

With the pen of an artist, Lyautey describes what happened. With the keen sense of the dramatist the scene was staged. In the vast courtyard of Rabezavana's own dwelling the chief had to appear. The troops wearing their decorations gained in Algeria, Tonking, Dahomey, were lined up. Accompanied by five hundred warriors, all armed with quick-firing rifles, Rabezavana rode in, and as he jumped from his horse, his followers flung down their arms, prostrating themselves on the ground. Their chief, bent to the ground at the feet of the French Commandant, made a long speech to express his submission; which was being interpreted at the same time. Then, pulling off his ring, he tended it to Lyautey with these words: 'This is my ring of commandment. I no longer command. Take it so that every one should see it and know that henceforth it is thou who commandest.'<sup>1</sup>

It was a tremendous surprise to Rabezavana, who expected to be banished, to learn that not only would he be left at liberty, but that he would be reinstated into his former place of authority, in order to restore this region, where he was known and respected.

Lyautey was merely acting as he knew Gallieni would have wished him to act.

During the past weeks it had been to him the greatest joy to see among his young officers an increasing confidence in the

<sup>1</sup> Lyautey, *op. cit.* p. 538.

efficacy of the Gallieni method, which this day was fully justified.

It was time for the work of reconciliation to begin. The very next day the French officer, with the ring of command on his finger, and the former foe rode out together to call back the scattered population to their villages, and to introduce among them the benefits of civilization. The submission of Rabezavana had the excellent repercussion in the submission, soon after, of another great rebel leader—Rainihetsimisaraka—and thus ended the insurrection.

In April 1897 General Gallieni was able to write: 'The country, six months ago in full anarchy, is being born again to normal life.'

He attributed the successful application of his method to the 'admirable devotion and the spirit of sacrifice of the soldiers and of their valiant Senegalese brothers-in-arms'.

If the cost in lives of the pacification had been small,<sup>1</sup> illness had taken a far heavier toll. Conditions under which the campaigns had been carried out were most trying; long marches under burning sun or again in torrential rain, climbing mountains, and crossing steep valleys, sleeping on the hard soil, subsisting on insufficient rations, owing to the difficulty of provisioning, happy to find some cattle and rice in a camp, out of which the rebels had been driven.

These facts were only too well known to the rebels, who, therefore, had always tried to evacuate their cattle and their stores of rice, and what had to be left behind was usually burnt.

That the rainy season did not stop the pursuit upset the plans of the rebels, and led finally to an earlier victory than had been anticipated.

Now that Imerina was pacified and brought under control, the question arose what would be best to do with regard to the other parts of the island, by far the greater in size, and inhabited by independent warlike tribes. Opinions were divided, but two alternatives only could be considered: either to limit the occupation to the central plateau, or to bring the whole of

<sup>1</sup> October 1896 to June 1897. Killed: 2 officers, 60 troops. Wounded: 5 officers, 191 men. Died of illness: 7 officers, 126 European and 181 native troops.

Madagascar under French influence. This would mean to succeed in what the Hova rulers, in spite of their proud title of Kings of Madagascar, had never achieved.

The first case would demand the creation of a strong line of military posts, to keep the Sakalava from continuing their raids to rob women and children, to kill and to destroy. The duty to protect the population of Imerina from such attacks, to prevent the smuggling of war materials, the traffic in slaves, to secure the safety of the European colonists, traders, merchants, and prospectors—all this would have required a large contingent of troops on the borders of Imerina and of the Betsileo.

On the other hand, between the occupied coast-line and the centre of the country stretched a broad zone of fertile land, supposed to be rich in mineral wealth, including gold. Therefore, for military and economic reasons, General Gallieni decided, if possible by amicable means, to attempt a penetration into these independent regions; to rule these tribes by means of a group of protectorates, which would have been as satisfactory to the central authority as to the proud tribal kings and queens, who had never yielded to Hova domination.

These territories were north, west, and south of Imerina. In the north, touching on the southern border of the territory of Diego Suarez; on the west, the so-called Sakalava country, bordering on the provinces of Majunga, Imerina and the Betsileo; the third comprised the whole south, from the west coast right across to Farafana, bordering on the Betsileo.

Unfortunately, the Sakalava refused all overtures, declaring that they would submit to force only. The force General Gallieni sent against them was to act as they had acted while pacifying Imerina; the same principles were to be applied, the same goal kept in view—organization on the march, bringing peace and material welfare as it moved along.<sup>1</sup>

Begun on 30th June 1897, the second period of military action came to an end in May 1902; General Gallieni's method having once again proved itself successful. The military continued as administrators. When the moral conquest had been fully established, he had these officers replaced by civilians. He was happy to see 'that the application of his principles

<sup>1</sup> Gallieni, *Neuf Ans*, Appendix, p. 327.



permitted much sooner than he had anticipated, the penetration into the most distant part of the island; bringing about order out of anarchy, abolishing barbaric practices, establishing the sovereignty of France, and enabling the conquered people, in this case the Sakalava, to develop into a much higher state of civilization.'

Later, in the case of the south, these same happy results were due to the military and administrative qualities of Colone Lyautey.<sup>1</sup> Joined to a great spirit of justice and of moderation, they enabled him to succeed in a most difficult task entrusted to him. For a term of two years, General Gallieni devolved part of his powers on to his friend, who was also his most illustrious disciple. It was thanks to Lyautey that the vast regions of the south were penetrated, pacified, and opened to commerce and to colonization.<sup>2</sup>

General Gallieni had attacked the tasks entrusted to him simultaneously, and if that of pacification had been accomplished, that of introducing civilization was to be continually progressing. He did not merely sign decrees, orders, and instructions, but drew them up himself;<sup>3</sup> deliberately shouldering the full responsibility of every new measure. Every success achieved he credited to his collaborators; every failure or mistake he took upon himself, as local conditions and distances,<sup>4</sup> lack of telegraphic or road communication, made it impossible for the men in those distant outposts to consult their chief. They acted according to the spirit of his instructions to the best of their capabilities, running the risk of making grave mistakes. For instance, one of those officers had believed himself to be acting wisely in having a tribal king shot (which General Gallieni genuinely regretted), while Lyautey, again on his own initiative, promised Rabezavana his life.

The moment had come when General Gallieni felt that he could leave the capital to undertake a sea journey of inspection around the whole island. He touched at practically every place and port along the coast, thus also at the Bay of St. Augustine and at Fort Dauphin. Everywhere the French flag was floating. What joy this sight would have caused

<sup>1</sup> Lyautey, *Dans le Sud de Madagascar*.

<sup>2</sup> *Lyautey of Morocco*, Sonia E. Howe, op. cit.

<sup>3</sup> Gallieni, *Lettres*, op. cit. p. 158.

<sup>4</sup> It took 45 days to reach the capital from Fort Dauphin.

Sylvain Roux, who some eighty years previously had so valiantly kept it hoisted, till compelled to lower it because the Ile de France had been lost to France.

The General made this tour of encouragement on the cruiser *La Perouse*, and one cannot help thinking of the gallant young naval officer who, about a hundred years earlier, had sailed in these waters; had listened to Benyowsky's cynical remarks that the conquest of Madagascar was really quite a simple matter. 'That the two million francs his unsuccessful experiments had cost France were a wholesome lesson to teach that power that in Madagascar nothing could be achieved unless done on a vast scale.'<sup>1</sup>

Studying the needs of every place he visited, the General realized that there was much that wanted doing—from putting up lighthouses to building a railway. When at last a gigantic light did flash from Cap d'Ambre to guide the seafarers safely around that difficult point, a great boon had been bestowed upon all those sailing in these waters.

Soon after General Gallieni had returned from this journey an impressive ceremony took place in Tananarive which left no place for doubt in the minds of the people that the insurrection had been completely quelled; that France was swaying the authority; that safety and tranquility had returned to the devastated country.

In the court of the Queen's palace, the two great rebel leaders, Rabezavana and Rainihetsimirasaka made their public submission and heard from the lips of the Governor-General the final verdict. To Rabezavana unconditional liberty; to Rainihetsimirasaka his life—but in exile.

To the crowds which were assembled, General Gallieni addressed words of encouragement and of sound advice, inviting them to help him carry out his scheme for their own benefit. His last words—'I do not say anything more about this; I have confidence in you'—were followed by enormous applause.

The finale of this impressive ceremony was a speech by Rasanjy, the Governor of Imerina. After admitting the folly of himself and his equals to have risen in revolt, and deserving to be punished by death, he said:

<sup>1</sup> See chapter on Benyowsky.

'We herewith assure the Governor-General that never again will we do the like, so as not to be for you an occasion for shame in the eyes of France, whose representative you are. As long as the sun shines above our heads we shall do our utmost to keep the peace, which is the fruit of your efforts.'<sup>1</sup>

Among the onlookers at this impressive scene was the Deputy for Reunion, who found these words and the enthusiasm they evoked 'comforting'. He and the other Frenchmen present were unanimous in their verdict that 'General Gallieni was the right man in the right place—master of the situation, who had known how to make himself feared, respected and loved.'

Meanwhile, Lyautey wrote to his friends: 'If only one leaves him here, and us with him. If only France does not spoil the work begun!'<sup>2</sup>

Fortunately, there was no question of that, and the Governor-General was able to carry out his various schemes for the welfare of the Malagasy, who he desired should enjoy as soon as possible the benefits of civilization.

This had been also the wish of Louis XIV when planning his great scheme for what was to be *La France Orientale*. The necessity of bringing these benefits to the inhabitants of Madagascar had been set forth in their memoranda to Colonial Ministers by every one of those of those visionaries and believers in the future of the Great Island. Yet all in vain.

What the French of the Bourbons and of the Empire had not been able to do, it was given to the Republic to achieve.

<sup>1</sup> Louis Brunet, *op. cit.* p. 394.

<sup>2</sup> Lyautey, *op. cit.* p. 123.

## *Chapter IV*

### THE FIRST-FRUITS OF CIVILIZATION

IF pacification and civilization were to go hand in hand, if the elimination of Hova hegemony was a condition of the former, then the counteraction of the domination by sorcerers and diviners was as much demanded for the latter. General Gallieni meant to attack these wielders of occult powers right away.

That this would mean a long and desperate struggle he knew, for those upholders of superstition and ignorance had a hold over the whole nation, from the highest to the lowest. Unfortunately, professing Christianity did not necessarily mean giving up the traditional beliefs in the intervention of the dead in human affairs, in good and evil spirits, in the power of charms, or in the necessity of consulting the diviners. The chief harm to the people arose, however, from their role as medicine men. But what more natural? The few qualified practitioners, European and Malagasy, could help but an infinitesimal number of cases.

The sorcerers hated the French, hated the new order of things, for progress meant for them loss of prestige, of power, of income. Because of this they fanned the flames of the insurrection; they were fighting for their very existence. And, indeed, so it was; for the Governor-General had not come out merely to create order in a country in the throes of anarchy, but to bring to the harrassed, miserable, poverty-stricken, suffering people the means for their material, physical, and moral improvement. As long as superstition and ignorance continued their reign, so long there could be no chance for the people.

These victims of the hardships to which they had been exposed by the insurrection were under-fed, living in the forests, exposed to the inclemency of the weather, compelled to see their fields lie fallow, and the harvests destroyed, in order to starve the foreigners.

Apart from these recent events, which tended to make the Hovas a fruitful soil for disease, they had inherited weakened constitutions, due to their terrible wars of the past, to the extortions by the officials which spelt ruin, as well as to the physically exhausting effects of the *corvée*. A steady process of depopulation had thus set in. The ravages of small-pox, tuberculosis, venereal diseases, malaria, and leprosy, in addition to the afore-mentioned conditions, had led to the complete extinction of the population in certain regions.

General Gallieni found a people of less than three millions in all the island which, considering the natural fertility of the race, was to him proof positive of the utterly unsatisfactory hygienic conditions. Therefore, together with military instructions to his collaborators commanding the circles, he gave others for the amelioration of the physical conditions, by an immediate introduction of a sanitary system. Every military post was to have its dispensary, where the army doctor was to give free treatment, as well as medicaments. These humane measures had at the same time far-reaching results in the political and economic situation of the country, due to the atmosphere of goodwill thereby created.

In Tananarive, and a few other places, conditions were somewhat different, for it was not as though nothing had been done in the way of medical assistance.<sup>1</sup> General Gallieni fully appreciated the efforts hitherto made by the missions, the Queen's Government having introduced certain hygienic measures being entirely due to the influence of the missionaries. Small-pox cases were to be isolated, lepers segregated; drunkenness and voluntary abortion, and the sale by butchers of diseased meat, had been made criminal offences. Unfortunately, these wise orders had more or less remained a dead letter.

In the course of the preceding twenty years, the missions had done their best by building several hospitals,<sup>2</sup> opening free dispensaries, organizing leper asylums. An Academy of Medicine had been founded by the L.M.S. in Tananarive, at which, by 1896, thirty-three Malagasy had been trained in a five years' course of study.

The General was deeply impressed 'by the perseverance of

<sup>1</sup> General Gallieni, *Colonie de Madagascar et Dépendence. Rapport sur la situation générale, 1896-1905.*

<sup>2</sup> In 1896 40,000 cases had been treated.

the missionaries in these praiseworthy efforts, which the Hova Government had tried to emulate; a hospital having been built by its orders, and an attempt having been made to create a school of medicine, which resulted in the training of a few doctors and midwives.'

As General Gallieni wished medical assistance to be widespread, the Medical Staff of the Army of Occupation, travelling from place to place, were to give their advice gratuitously to the population. Everywhere dispensaries were to be built—if possible with a few rooms for serious cases.

A year and a half later, he issued the following order, as a proof of the success of these early attempts: 'In every province or circle there must be either a dispensary or a hospital, also an orphanage; to be kept up by means of contributions by the villages, but, where necessary, subsidized by the local budget.'

In order to provide for a supply of native doctors the General at once founded in Tananarive a school of medicine. He also requisitioned one of the mission hospitals, and soon after, having come to an understanding with the different missionary bodies, took over two more.

In order to prevent maternal and infant mortality, midwives were to be trained and maternity homes opened. In Tananarive a dispensary was also at once organized to provide for every one free advice and medicaments, indiscriminately of creed. He meant by all means to fight 'the weird and murderous practices' of the sorcerers. Apart from these malign influences, there were, however, other elements favouring disease: chief among them the total lack of cleanliness of body, garments, dwellings, and certain tribal customs.

In the central part of Imerina a fertile soil for the spread of epidemics was provided by an annual feast solemnized in honour of the dead. In order to supply the dead with a new garment the tombs were entered, and the corpse turned over. In the Betsileo, on the other hand a funeral custom reigned which led to physical degeneration. For two or three days between death and funeral, while the corpse lay exposed, orgies of drunkenness and sexual excess were carried on by the friends and relations.

One of the various means General Gallieni was using to fight disease and degeneration, was the spread of an elementary

knowledge of hygiene by means of articles printed in a journal published in Malagasy, for the dissemination of all he desired the people to know. The articles on hygiene were also published in booklet form, and as a great many of the inhabitants of Tananarive could read, the results were excellent. Thus, for instance, venereal diseases not being considered shameful, large numbers of women at once came to the dispensaries for advice and treatment. In Tananarive the hospital had soon to be enlarged.

Simultaneously with his orders concerning medical assistance, General Gallieni issued others concerning education.

With regard to this measure he had more than one object in view: from the political point of view it was imperative to popularize among the rising generation the language of the sovereign Power; from the economic, to teach arts and crafts for the twofold purpose of providing artisans, which would develop a higher standard of living, as well as provide the necessary skilled labour, to assist the colonists; last, not least, to serve the Government in the public works.

The Governor-General therefore at once opened an industrial school in Tananarive and commanded that every school, even in the villages, was to have its workshop, its garden, its experimental field. The question of the teaching staff caused him no difficulty. His soldiers had to turn into masters, according to what they had been in their civilian life.

He had every cause to congratulate himself on the excellency of this scheme. He saw himself justified in having drawn on what he described as 'the inexhaustible qualities of devotion and ingenuity of the French soldier, who, ready to put his hand to every task, proved himself always on the height of his task. All that was needed was an appeal to his initiative, intelligence and his *amour-propre*.' In these tasks his beloved Foreign Legionaries proved themselves once again useful collaborators; such as they had been in Tonking.

He had no fear that by turning his soldiers to civilian tasks discipline would suffer. On the contrary, he believed that they supplied them with a moral and physical activity, which could not but be beneficial. By making the soldiers his collaborators in the work of civilizing Madagascar, he hoped to see them become so interested in the country, that they would

feel inclined to remain there and form an excellent element among the colonists.

In the pacified districts, administration in its various forms demanded of officers and men those same qualities of good sense, of knowledge of the people, of a prudent initiative, as the military operations. The success of this method the General had frequent cause to witness when on tours of inspection.

How terribly much there was to be done in every sphere of public life he had realized in that first week. The result had been those decrees and orders which, like life-giving streams, rising at the source of a master-mind, were to carry life into every corner of Madagascar. If civilization was to have a fair field, here something had to be broken down, there something to be built up. The feudal system with its privileges of the Hova nobles had to be abolished; the tribal life to be quickened; a sound system of justice, in which the best of native customs had to be incorporated, had also to be elaborated. There was the introduction of equitable taxation, so vital from the financial point of view; but also of such great political, moral, and economic importance. It was the tangible proof of French authority having come to stay; it was the stimulus required to make an inherently lazy people work. Once they had learned to earn they would begin to spend, whereby commerce and industry would develop.

The *corvée* in its old form could not be continued, yet workmen were required both by the colonists, and by the Government for its vast schemes of public works. The General therefore passed a temporary law, in which taxation and labour were combined, to be modified according to country, the people, and their mentality. Thus, for instance, every male among the Hovas, from the age of sixteen to sixty, had either to pay twenty-five francs a year, or give fifty days of labour of nine hours a day, for which he was to be paid twenty centimes, a sum sufficient to feed him. Exempted from taxation and labour were soldiers, militia, Government clerks, and any Hova who knew French, also all who had entered into a contract of labour with a colonist. Unfortunately, this latter clause lent itself to tremendous abuses. By paying a small sum to some European, who nominally engaged them, thousands



bought their freedom from work and taxation by these fictitious contracts, to be free to continue their lazy, unprofitable existence. To this abuse an end had to be made.

The urgency of a sound fiscal system was of tremendous importance to carry out all the schemes for the welfare and development of the island, and this demanded a local budget. The goal to be kept in view was to make the colony, as soon as possible, self-supporting. This end the Governor-General succeeded in achieving within a few years.

Meanwhile the readiness with which taxes were paid was the best proof of their being fair and just. What decidedly encouraged these new tax-payers was the fact that their money was being spent locally, and for their own benefit.

During the period of pacification it was as impossible to fix a budget for every circle, as to send funds at fixed times from Tananarive; the officers in command had therefore the right to use the money they had collected in taxes.

There was hardly a department of the economy of the State which General Gallieni had not to reorganize or to organize. Naturally, there had to be a certain elasticity, permitting of a continuous readjustment.

Ninety per cent of Madagascar was as yet unknown, because unexplored. The island had to be studied bit by bit. Every one of the officers had therefore to collect information from every point of view, and to explore the country in which he found himself. However, the information gained to-day was often contradicted or modified by that gained to-morrow.

In October 1896 there was not one road worthy of that name (the one to Majunga being unused at this time),<sup>1</sup> nor any river traffic. There was one single telegraph line to link Madagascar with the outer world. Everything had to be planned and started. Undaunted by all these difficulties, the Governor-General, assisted by his staff, let these various public works be put in hand, 'in order to enable France to get some gain out of her new possession'.

In France, opinions concerning the value of Madagascar as a colony were divided. To some it was worthless, because England had not made that island one of her colonies. Others again believed it to be possessed of enormous natural resources

<sup>1</sup> The one Hastie had built had long been broken.

easily got at. A stream of would-be colonists, often with insufficient capital, had therefore come into Madagascar; soon to be disillusioned.

To prevent these tragedies, General Gallieni had a special study made of conditions for immigration. His sympathies were all with the colonists, especially with the earlier ones, who had borne the heat of the day, and he was therefore anxious to help their arduous undertakings by every means possible at his disposal. He organized, therefore, in each province a Consultative Chamber, consisting of military and civilian officials, and of colonists representing agricultural, industrial, and commercial interests. In order to spread information and knowledge, he founded an official paper, and, very soon after, also a handbook for prospective colonists, for use in France.<sup>1</sup>

However much General Gallieni liked to see everything done quickly, he was nevertheless against all haste, for he contended that 'in spite of the urgency for reforms, they had to be progressive and carefully thought out, so as to suit the country'. He was especially anxious to avoid in Madagascar a repetition of certain mistakes committed in other French colonies.

One of the earliest laws promulgated by the Governor-General was that of the religious neutrality of the Government. Every one was to be free to believe what he liked, and the missionary bodies were to be free to carry on their work, so long as there was no interference in politics.

Unfortunately, rivalry between the representatives of the two churches was still extremely acute. That in itself, though regrettable, need not have troubled General Gallieni, had not behind the religious question loomed the political. He realized that for the Malagasy, England was the Power behind the Protestants; and England, so they believed, was the enemy of France, while France was believed to be behind the Roman Catholics. The Protestant Hovas believed that England would come to their rescue, and drive France out of Madagascar. The Entente Cordiale had not yet been established, and antagonism between the French and English was mutual.

The ground on which this distressing rivalry was chiefly fought out was in schools. General Gallieni felt very much inclined to close them all, whatever their denomination. This

<sup>1</sup> *Le Journal officiel de Madagascar. Le Guide de l'Immigrant.*

being impossible, he tried to remedy the evil by founding Government schools in which children would be treated on an equality as Malagasy and French subjects. He therefore at once founded a normal school, the Collège Myre de Vilers, with three departments: for training teachers, interpreters, and future Government officials. The General duly recognized that what education there was, was due to the missions.<sup>1</sup> He found the Protestant schools attended by 180,500 children; the Roman Catholic schools by 27,000.<sup>2</sup> He had the highest regard for what he called<sup>3</sup> 'a good missionary, whose one aim was to help the people', but for those interfering in politics, or in the local government, whatever their creed, he had no use whatever.

It was from the scholars of these schools that he had to draw the students for the higher educational establishments. The fact that there was this enormous number of children attending school convinced him of the desire for education by the Hovas as a race, as well as of their eagerness to rise to a higher state of civilization. He found, as Sir Robert Farquhar had done, that it was indeed the most capable and intelligent race of the many races of Madagascar. He therefore meant to make use of the Hova, and, once French authority should have been unquestionably accepted, to let the leading families regain their former position of influence in the government of the country.

For the moment he had other plans and preoccupations. In the sphere of politics it was the spread of the French language among the masses, thereby to be able to make the people realize that France, by occupying their country, meant to improve their material conditions. He hoped to make it plain that education and religion were two distinct things, and that feuds on religious grounds could not be tolerated. In the autumn of 1897 he had occasion to explain this to the people of Fianarantsoa.

At a great Kabary<sup>4</sup> attended by 40,000 people, he made a

<sup>1</sup> G. Grandidier, *Gallieni*, p. 161. Roman Catholic Mission, 186,000 adherents.

<sup>2</sup> In 1895 London Missionary Society had 340,000 adherents, 136,000 communities. Friends Foreign Missionary Association 147 schools with 9,465 scholars. Norwegian Mission 50,000 members, 500 communities, 35,000 scholars. A total without the S.P.G. of 180,465 scholars.

<sup>3</sup> Gallieni, *Lettres*, op. cit. p. 159.

<sup>4</sup> *Gouvernement Général de Madagascar*. Rapport d'Ensemble. Paris, 1899.

long speech which left no doubt in the minds of the vast audience what the will of the Government was—namely perfect freedom for all to believe what they liked. He promised to open also in their country schools similar to those which were now greatly appreciated in Imerina, in which, so he said:

‘One does not speak of religion. You can all sit together on the same bench, Protestants, Catholics, and those who only worship their ancestors. You will be taught to love each other, to love your beautiful country the Betsileo, to love your new fatherland France, and also how to become skilled artisans and good agriculturists.’

The General reassured the people of the absolute neutrality of the Government, which would punish any one attempting to bring pressure on their religious convictions. ‘Religious tolerance and respect for your customs are the only principles of the Government of the Republic of which I am the faithful servant. It will never permit encroachment on these principles.’ This declaration was greatly appreciated by the people.

It was a most delicate and ungrateful task which he had to carry out with regard to the missionaries and their work. How difficult becomes evident from his reports and his letters; but also how genuinely he tried to be fair and just to all parties. That he was liable to make mistakes he frankly admitted.<sup>1</sup> His one care was to benefit the Malagasy. Therefore he was glad to be able to state that the Protestant missionaries were ready to fall in with his scheme for teaching handicrafts. He granted subsidies indiscriminately to Protestant and Roman Catholic schools alike, in which these were taught.

The General appreciated the difficulty which the British missionaries had in accepting the new order of things. He understood human nature. The arrival of two delegates of the London Missionary Society from London was to him a welcome opportunity for a heart-to-heart talk with these gentlemen, to whom he frankly told all he objected to in their followers. This interview cleared the air, and resulted in the presentation of a declaration signed by all their members.

He wrote concerning this incident to a friend in France:<sup>2</sup>

‘They condemned all hostile words or actions directed

<sup>1</sup> *Lettres*, op. cit. p. 58.

<sup>2</sup> Gallieni, *Lettres*, p. 154.

against France. This declaration was put up in all their churches and schools. They pledged themselves to organize their schools on the French model, to use French school-books, and to have at least one French master per school. They have kept their word.'

He was as severe against the Roman Catholic missionaries, whom he admitted having always treated with goodwill;

'Free to follow out their work in full liberty; but we could not allow, without great hurt to our cause, that they should permit themselves to step out of the religious domain, by enroaching on the attributes of my European officials; or that they should keep up divisions and hatred, which we were working hard to disperse.'

This attitude of impartiality was made a cause of complaint in France. When informed of it by friends, General Gallieni merely replied<sup>1</sup> 'that the Roman missions had no cause to feel themselves persecuted. That is a mistake . . . whatsoever my personal ideas concerning religious questions may be, I have always tried to let myself be guided by what was the best for the interests for the colony and of our natives.' By his firmness, fairness, and equity, General Gallieni won the day.

Another factor which helped towards settling the religious problem, was that, on General Gallieni's suggestion, the Protestant Missionary Societies of Paris<sup>2</sup> had, by request of the Government, taken over most of the educational work of the London Missionary Society. Of the other Missionary bodies, which had not been mixed up with politics, General Gallieni expressly mentioned in his official report what he described as their 'correct attitude'.

As to the Malagasy, it came to them as a great, but wholesome, surprise, to realize that Protestants could be loyal French subjects, and that England was not behind every one who was not a Roman Catholic. The strain was eased, the religious strife among the natives came to an end. The missions, left in perfect liberty to carry on their spiritual activity, loyally co-operated with the Governor-General in his great task of civilizing the Malagasy, whose welfare was of as great an interest to them as to him.

<sup>1</sup> *op. cit.* pp. 153, 155.

<sup>2</sup> This Society took over 1,290 schools with over 75,000 scholars and 2 normal schools with 119 students—also 550 churches out of 900.

When General Gallieni was not travelling about, which he did six months in the year, he occasionally spent some weeks in Ambohimanga, the former summer residence of the Hova rulers. Here he took his rest; received his friends in delightful intimacy; studying English with one of the London Missionary Society's missionaries, and German with a cultured Foreign Legionary.

In Tananarive he inhabited an ordinary house, near the royal palace, in preference to the palace which M. le Myre de Vilers had built as Residency in the lower town. General Gallieni moved into it later on, but the first year he felt it advisable to live close where the Queen used to live, as a reminder to the people that France was sovereign in her stead.

Meanwhile, everywhere in Imerina life was awakening—Lyautey called it 'a resurrection'.<sup>1</sup> Ten months had elapsed since Rabezavana had made his submission, when, accompanied by his friend, General Gallieni visited that very district. Where destruction had reigned, and the inhabitants had been hiding in the forests, where the villages had been in ruins, there he now saw a sight which rejoiced his heart.

As the two friends visited village after village, the General saw more of like success; everywhere the schools crowded with children; workrooms, where girls were learning to sew and to do laundry work and housework; boys at carpenter's benches or busy at some other craft.

Commandant Lyautey, who so passionately believed in his chief's methods, had excellent opportunity to put them into practice. Free to use his initiative, he had created a flourishing township at Ankazobé. With its avenues of trees, its squares, its public gardens, its Government buildings, its shops and industrial school, it was the joy of his heart. His own house was built at last, but 'in it everything was installed in such a way as a home should be to set an example', so he wrote, adding:

'This is the English method, the right one, which, most convincingly affirms the permanency of the occupation; avoiding all suggestions of war or of bivouac, it leads to the installation of other houses of the same type. The Malagasy Governors are imitating us; they are plastering their houses,

<sup>1</sup> Lyautey, *op. cit.* p. 215.

<sup>2</sup> Lyautey, *op. cit.* p. 565.

are putting glass into their windows, they paint their rooms, buy furniture and curtains, and this encourages industry.<sup>1</sup>

To the official, unadorned reports of General Gallieni, the letters which Lyautey wrote from Madagascar supply the complement: they present in a graphic way the pulsating life which was beginning to spring up everywhere in Imerina. One sees the villages, the crowded market-places, the rice-fields; one hears the children sing or recite their lessons; speaking French fluently. He takes his friends to the model farms, to the experimental grounds for new cereals, for potatoes, for vanilla, for coffee. Here a road is being made, there a bridge. Everywhere progress; and General Gallieni, the inspirer of this new life, going about encouraging, stimulating his collaborators, who were creating a new atmosphere of rest, hope, and contentment among a population formerly so sorely tried.

Lyautey had been told on his arrival at Tananarive, with malicious irony, by certain sceptics that 'these good days will not last. The insurrection will revive after the harvest has been gathered in.' But it did not, and the originator of this security could give himself to furthering his manifold schemes in every branch of administration; or again he travelled about, being everywhere received by crowds of people who, in true Malagasy fashion, thronged to see him, as they had done the Queen. He was glad of this for patriotic reasons. Such demonstrations were, to his mind, the best proof both to the foreigners in the country, and to that element among the Hovas which was still hostile to the new régime, 'that the representative of France received from the majority of the population tokens of sympathy and of respect'.<sup>2</sup>

When the General wrote these lines to his friend, it was not from vanity, but in reply to a criticism levied against his having mentioned these ovations in his report. There is never a tone of self-complacency in his letters, which, on the contrary, show how keenly he felt his responsibility and the difficulties of the task. What praise comes in, is for his collaborators, and for all those who helped him carry out the great scheme of improving the conditions of life in Madagascar; the colonists, the savants, the humble soldiers; it is of their share in the success

<sup>1</sup> Lyautey, *op. cit.* p. 559.

<sup>2</sup> Gallieni, *Lettres*, p. 53.

he writes. His letters supply the key to the working of his mind, while those of Lyautey show the application of his ideas and their results.

What the modesty of Gallieni would not permit him to put into words, that his friends expressed bluntly.

'Gallieni has won the hearts of the masses. . . . What matter if in Paris the Governor-General's actions are not always understood, or that quite possibly he is a thorn in the flesh of certain bureaucrats? Nevertheless, he is the right man, who has won the affection of the native inhabitants, of the humble colonists, of the small men. We are not many here in the superior commandments', he wrote, 'to understand him, and to swallow him wholesale. His blind followers are the lieutenants, the under-officers and the soldiers who are ready to give the utmost of their efforts, if they only may but get a glance from him. It is the natives who look upon him as a demi-god. . . . They are full of trust and confidence since they have understood his generous goodwill towards them.'<sup>1</sup>

Lyautey wondered whether in Paris General Gallieni was duly appreciated. For him his chief was

'the most marvellous example of a man of action, a great organizer, and the best awakener of energy, to rival at this moment the Anglo-Saxon across the water, Gallieni against Cecil Rhodes. What a match to watch!'<sup>2</sup>

For his part, Gallieni wrote concerning his faithful disciple and collaborator: 'He is the most perfect colonial officer I have ever come across. . . . It would be a great thing had we more of his like . . .'<sup>3</sup>

How rightly General Gallieni had judged his friends time has proved.<sup>4</sup>

If loved by the common people, General Gallieni knew that this was not yet so the case with the nobles.

Even in certain quarters in France reproaches had been levied against his severe measures,<sup>5</sup> with regard to those whom he had court-martialled. To his friends, who passed on this criticism, he regretfully admitted having been compelled to do so:

<sup>1</sup> Lyautey, *op. cit.* p. 547.

<sup>3</sup> Gallieni, *Lettres*, p. 47.

<sup>5</sup> Gallieni, p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> Lyautey, *op. cit.* p. 550.

<sup>4</sup> *Lyautey of Morocco*, Sonia E. Howe.



'Had my predecessor been less weak', he wrote, 'I need not have been quite so severe—but in face of that wild fire of insurrection which it was my duty to quell, I had no other choice. Once I was master of the situation I took recourse to gentleness, persuasion and goodwill. I even spared the lives of bandits and assassins, who had deserved death a hundred times, but I could not afford at that time to show what seemed like weakness. I can do so to-day, because the Hova have realized that I know how and when to be firm.'<sup>1</sup> The General was always ready to listen to wise counsels, for, as he wrote to this same friend:<sup>2</sup>

'the engine of Madagascar, of which I am the driver for the present, is occasionally restive and complicated. Therefore it is for me impossible not to value those counsels which have for their object to shew me the obstacles on the lines.

'In all the abuses and imperfections you point out I have my share; if public opinion credits me personally with the few successes obtained during the last three years, then mine is also the responsibility for what is bad quite as much as that which is good. On the other hand, I feel that whatever happy results there are, they are due to the fact of my having been surrounded by really intelligent and devoted men, both military and civilian, anxious to carry out the ideas of their chief, and this in spite of the divergence of points of view, so frequent in colonial matters.'

The Fashoda incident, which added to the already strained relations between England and France, had its repercussion also in Madagascar, causing General Gallieni serious anxiety. Insubordination broke out among certain tribes, stirred up by Indians whose unfriendly attitude was continued because they considered themselves to be backed by the British Government. The General wrote: 'We have always to bear in mind the danger of war with England.' By the end of 1899 Colonel Lyautey wrote:<sup>3</sup>

'The menace of an imminent war keeps us in this distant and lonely island in anxious expectation, because we know that in the case of a maritime war we are of necessity to be sacrificed. The cypher telegrams exchanged with Paris

<sup>1</sup> *Lettres*, Court martial, Queen's Deposition, p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> Gallieni, *op. cit.* pp. 40, 41. <sup>3</sup> *Lyautey*, *op. cit.* p. 622.

permit of no illusions. Gallieni has given instruction . . . and has informed us that in all probability it will be by the firing of cannon on the coast, the cables cut—that, without any preliminary notice, we shall discover the outbreak of hostilities.’

Fortunately these fears proved vain, and ten years later the King of England not only brought about a relaxing of the diplomatic strain between the two nations, but also a cessation of the century-old Anglo-French rivalry within Madagascar. What Sir Robert Farquhar, as a loyal subject of the British Crown, had deliberately introduced as a political means, to that King Edward put an end by the *Entente Cordiale*.

Two and a half years had passed for General Gallieni in strenuous labours. The basis of a normal development having been laid, he felt it was time to return to France in order to report on the situation, and to plead in person for the necessary credits required to carry out two of the most urgent enterprises, a railway from the capital to the east coast, and fortifications for Diego Suarez.

He succeeded in doing so. Colonel Roques,<sup>1</sup> who had been making all the preliminary surveys on the spot, was entrusted with the task of building the railway, and Colonel Joffre<sup>2</sup> was put in charge of the new naval base and of constructing the fortifications of Diego Suarez.

During the year General Gallieni was in France, General Pennequin acted as his representative. The lines having been traced, he followed them loyally.

In 1900 General Gallieni returned to Madagascar, where he was to continue for another five years the task entrusted to him in 1896.

Among the many difficulties he had to deal with was that of colonization, and this for some of the very same reasons which had upset the plans of the pioneer colonists in the days of the Kings of France. General Gallieni put these difficulties down to the fact that the colony had begun with a very heavy adverse balance. ‘We acquired much less than we had been led to believe,’ he wrote, ‘and this quite apart from optimism

<sup>1</sup> Minister of War in 1916.

<sup>2</sup> Generalissimo in 1914 while General Gallieni was Military Governor of Paris.

and illusions born of impatience and of superficial knowledge. Insufficient and erroneous notions, widely spread, yet too soon accepted as true, have led to the creation of enterprises doomed from the start to failure.<sup>1</sup>

There were moments when General Gallieni almost began to fear lest Madagascar might prove for good an island of unfulfilled expectation, yet he did not let such gloomy thoughts depress him for long. True, there was much to be done, but much was also being done, and when, in March of 1899, he had written his first detailed official report a tone of quiet confidence pervaded its pages. He let statistics speak.

In his reports of 1899 and of 1905 certain items are mentioned which remind one of the early reports on Madagascar by the first Portuguese to discover that great island, as well as the first books ever published about it.

Riches, in those days merely supposed to exist in Madagascar, appear now as valuable articles of export in General Gallieni's reports, such as minerals, gold, silver, precious stones, tortoise-shell, wax, ebony, indigo, cloves. . . .

But while the Portuguese had but found a cargo of cloves from a shipwrecked Malay junk, the General's report mentions 104,829 trees of cloves, and coffee trees, of which the Sieur de la Merveille had brought the first plants from Yemen, are quoted as 1,839,139. Vines, of which the Count de Maudave had planted 10,000 as an experiment, appear in General Gallieni's official report as being 240,896.

General Gallieni continued a work which he described as 'a labour of patience and of time', which, to succeed, required yet two other moral qualities, namely those of love and hope.

'I have faith in the future of Madagascar,' he wrote, 'and I trust that this work will not be fruitless; that, apart from material benefits, it will procure for France the honour of having brought to a nation yet young, the benefits of her civilizing power.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gr. Général de Madagascar. *Rapport 1905*, p. 3.      <sup>2</sup> *Rapport 1899*, op. cit.

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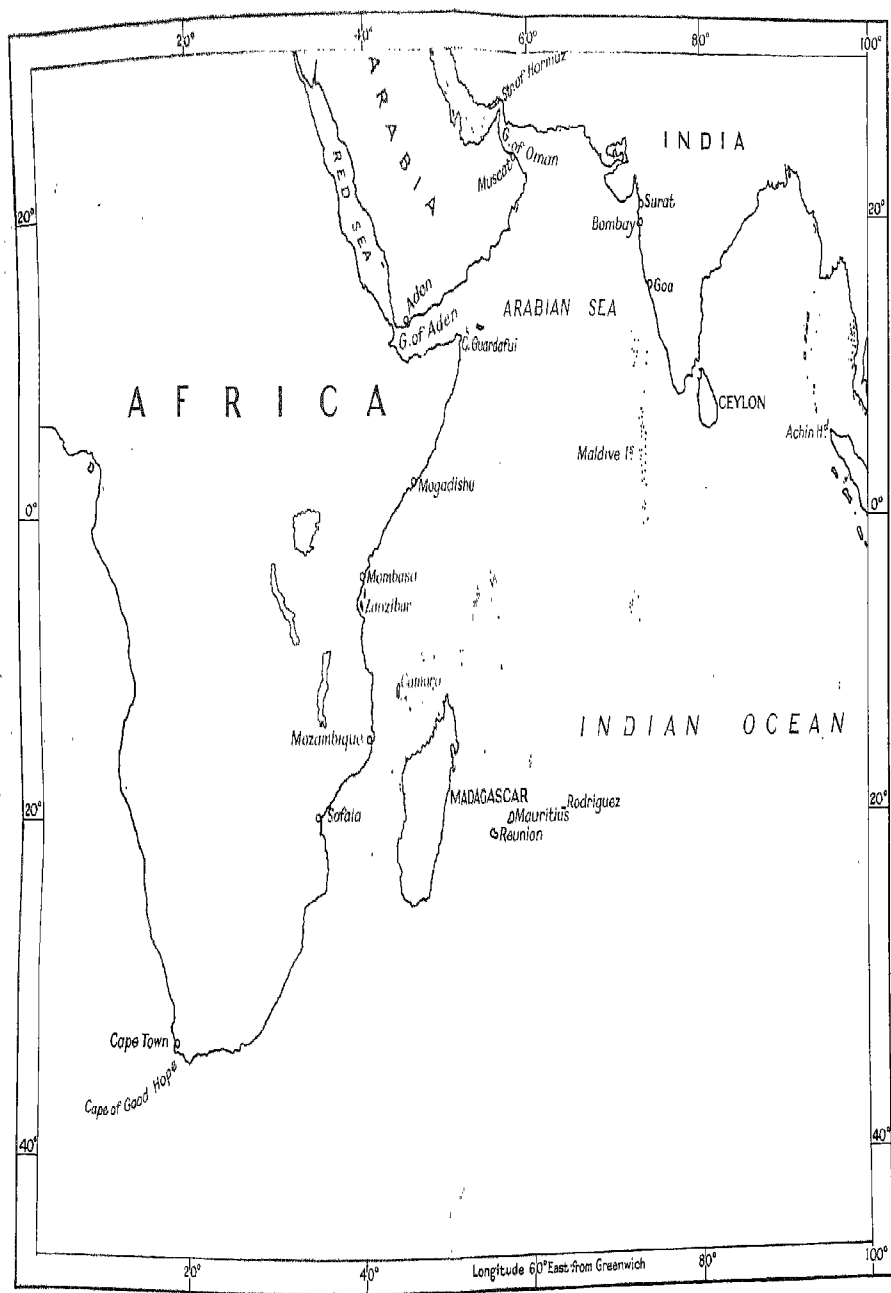
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