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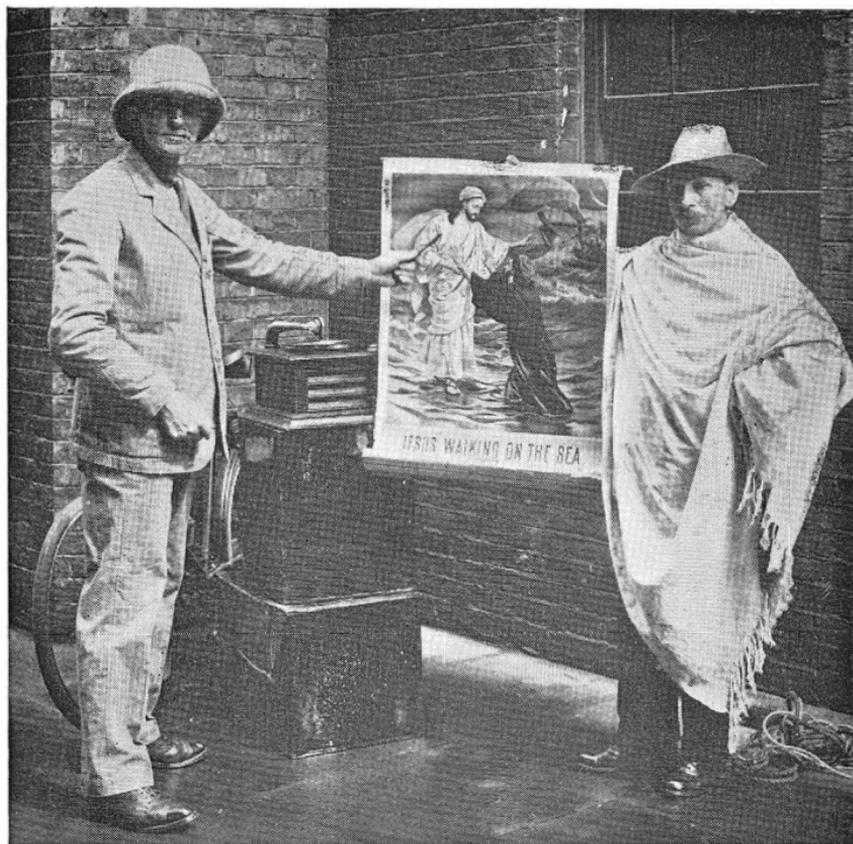
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Two years ago, while the articles which make up this book were still in the press for *World Dominion*, came the news that the hand which wrote them was still. The note of challenge which Kendall Gale sounded rings yet more clearly now that he has gone. Astonishingly fresh and vital are the words that come to us out of the past, for conditions among the forest tribes of Madagascar remain, alas, much as he described them.

“He, being dead, yet speaketh.”



KENDALL GALE WITH GRAMOPHONE, BICYCLE  
AND PICTURE ROLL

# Church Planting in Madagascar

By  
WILLIAM KENDALL GALE

*With a Foreword by*  
DR. T. COCHRANE  
Editor, *World Dominion*

THE WORLD DOMINION PRESS,  
FOUNDERS LODGE, MILD MAY PARK,  
LONDON, N.I.

*First Published 1937*

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN  
BY EBENEZER BAYLIS AND SON, LTD., THE  
TRINITY PRESS, WORCESTER, AND LONDON

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## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

WILLIAM KENDALL GALE was born in 1873 at Addingham, Yorks. He held a pastorate at Crookes Congregational Church, Sheffield. In 1905 he married Miss Edith Margaret Gaunt. He offered himself to the London Missionary Society, and was appointed in 1908 to Ambohitrolomahitsy, Madagascar. After a brief service as a chaplain in France during the War, he returned to Madagascar in 1918. His pioneering work among the degraded tribes in the north of the island dates from this time. He died suddenly after an operation, on June 7th, 1935, in his sixty-second year.

## FOREWORD

THIS book has been compiled from articles contributed to *World Dominion* from time to time by my beloved and lamented friend William Kendall Gale. He and I had many talks together, and much correspondence, on missionary principles.

We of the World Dominion Movement are in touch with an ever-increasing number of missionaries in many parts of the world, who stand for missionary methods which we have advocated for many years, viz., widespread evangelism, with a view to the formation of indigenous churches which, from their inception, shall be self-governing, self-propagating and self-supporting, and which shall undertake the task of the continuous evangelization of their own neighbourhood. William Kendall Gale was one of the best advocates, by pen and in practice, of these methods. In him the London Missionary Society, with which I am proud to have been associated, has the honour of adding to its heroic roll one of the greatest missionaries of modern times.

His was truly an apostolic ministry. He founded over two hundred Christian churches in Madagascar.

If every missionary could have the success which Kendall Gale achieved, the world's mission fields would soon have enough indigenous churches to inaugurate the post-missionary era.

THOMAS COCHRANE.

(Editor of *World Dominion*.)

# CHURCH PLANTING IN MADAGASCAR

## CHAPTER I

### A CRY AS OF PAIN

MY work in Madagascar, during my twenty-six years of service, has been essentially that of church-planting, often among unknown and always among unevangelized tribes.

I was appointed by the London Missionary Society in 1908 to a fairly wide district, with sixty-one churches already founded, more than sufficient to engage all my time and energy. I speedily ran round the district to spy out the land, with the result that I felt that the station was not central enough for the efficient working of those sixty-one churches. With the consent of the committee, my wife and I, and our three small children, trekked two days' journey farther north to the village of Anjozorobe, at that time literally at "the back of beyond." I had already accepted it as a fact

that my work was defined for me and that my sole responsibility was limited to the organizing, visitation, and advancement of those sixty-one churches. When the mission house had been built and occupied, however, how often did I mount to our upper veranda and gaze round the wide horizon, wondering, wondering what there was behind those northern mountains, what beyond the low-lying land east of the great forest, what beyond that sweeping, undulating plain to the west! The south I knew, for we had come from that direction, but of the rest I knew nothing. And yet I knew too much for my peace of mind—the people were all in darkness.

Beyond me, to the north, east and west at that time, there was a stretch of country nearly 500 miles by 300, without a Protestant missionary of any denomination, and, though there were a few churches in the larger villages on the coast, and a few widely-scattered messengers of the Malagasy Native Missionary Society in the interior, apart from these the whole area was utterly without the Gospel of Christ. I knew that gross darkness must cover the land, and gross, untellable wickedness prevail everywhere. I was not under orders, either from the local committee or the Home Board, to attempt the evangelization of that wide area. The missionary, however, is always subject to other and more imperative orders: the call of God and human

need. There was my duty to those sixty-one churches, but had I no responsibility for those other peoples "in heathen darkness lying"?

No man could possibly cover an area 500 miles by 300 and live; no missionary could refuse all responsibility for any part of that area and "live". What beat upon my brain was, not what would happen to them if they died without Christ, but what would happen to me if I let them, if, with my own lamp lighted I allowed them to wander and die in darkness; not, would they be saved, but could I; not, would they be lost, but should not I? "Inasmuch as ye did it not" has very disturbing implications for every Christian, and the missionary is supposed to be a Christian. A cry as of pain came up from those far lands, ringing, echoing, beating upon my ear-drums. Surging emotional storms were generated by those cries. Tragic human need, though as yet unknown by experience or personal contact, tore at one's heart strings. I knew, too, what alone could minister to and meet that need. I had it in my power, under God, to "heal" their "diseases". I was not pathetically helpless in the face of those needs, like a man in a rowing boat in a tidal wave, or like an ignorant Malagasy peasant utterly without knowledge or medicines, when plague is slaughtering people all around him by the hundred. I knew what could be done, and that I ought to attempt it.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PEOPLE IN DARKNESS

*Bezanzano*.—In that low-lying, unhealthy land east of the forest, 100 miles by 60, lives the Bezanzano tribe, numbering about 80,000 people, shy, lazy, filthy in person and morals. Brutal, cunning, superstitious, they were creatures of fear and the elemental passions, haunted night and day by dread of malignant and vindictive spirits, each person loaded with charms, either to protect himself from evil or to strike with evil, each distrustful even of his own wife and children, much more so of his neighbours, and thus ready to slay on the spot; all of them bound by sin and Satan. A little, however (tragically little), had been done for the Bezanzano tribe; Peake in the south, and Milledge, my predecessor, in the north, had founded eleven churches.

“The business of the King requireth haste.” Not even waiting, therefore, until I had built a habitable dwelling for my wife and children, I paid a visit to this tribe. And I saw things which “stabbed my spirit broad awake.”

I found that the people only worked two days a week, all the rest being *taboo*, otherwise, as they supposed, the spirits would have a "down" on them. So fertile is the land that they could exist by toiling two days a week. For the most part they only ate one meal a day. So incorrigible was their laziness that this they put off until the very end of the day, when the aching void and hunger's pangs gripped their vitals, compelling them to bestir themselves to cut firewood, pound rice, fetch water, and cook a meal. It was not that their appetites were so sluggish that food nauseated them, for eating and sexual intercourse were their supreme pleasures, but that they were too bone-lazy to prepare for and cook meals until driven to it by insufferable hunger. Then, when the meal was ready they gorged like swine, and, full with a dangerous repletion, they rolled over where they were and slept until morning, or more probably, until the following evening.

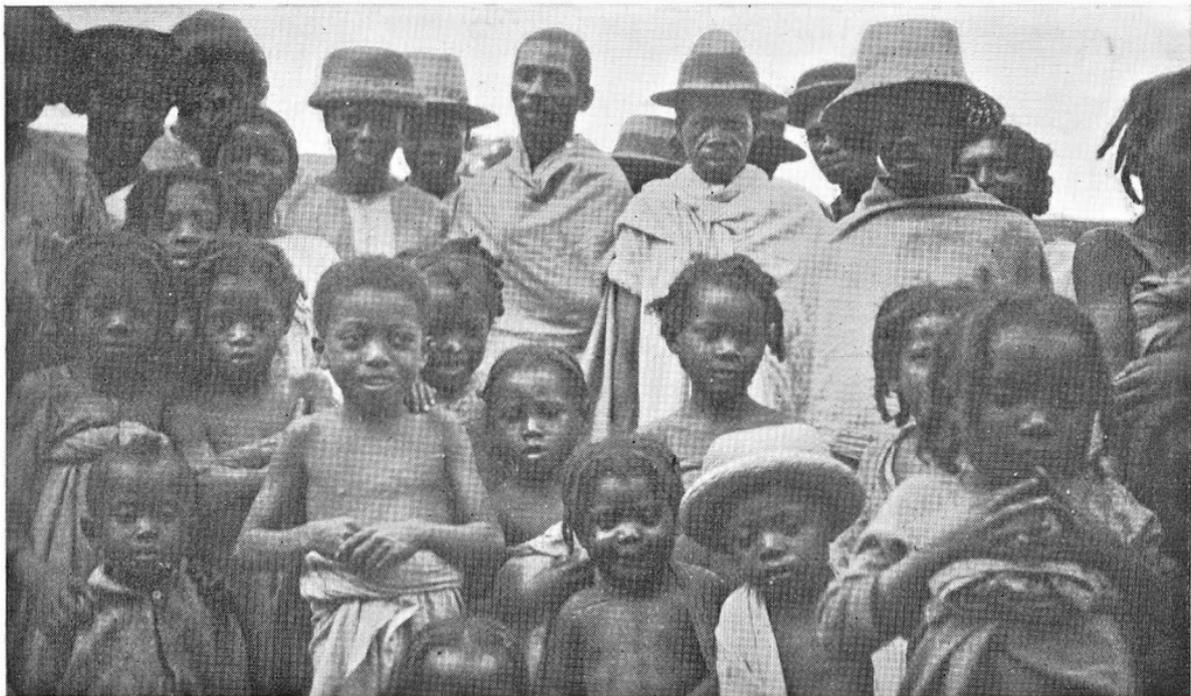
I also found, to my horror and disgust, village after village where every man had been "married" to every woman and every woman to every man. A man would first kick out his wife and then coerce another man's wife to live with him. The same thing happened in other huts, and, as though it were a game of "Family Coach" or "Paul Jones," each found a partner immediately. And, such was the immoral character of these people that none of them

ever thought of sexual self-restraint, but "married" or not, would indulge a burning passion freely and indiscriminately; in fact, the moral law as we understand it did not obtain among them. It was an appalling situation, but there it was.

One of the favourite "prescriptions" of the witch-doctor, when called in to "prescribe" for a person critically ill, is that he must be taken to a certain dark, cold, forest pool and be completely immersed, with the almost inevitable result that the shock kills him. How often have I saved life by becoming dictator and ordering people to return home with someone desperately ill! Never moving without a box of medicines, I have prescribed for the sick, given directions as to food and nursing, and thus saved lives from being uselessly sacrificed. In other cases I have found people when ill abandoned absolutely and left to die. My predecessor's widow joined us in Madagascar. On one occasion she was in the Bezanozano country, and, in visiting, caught some people in the act of smothering a boy who was ill, the nursing of the lad being a toil and thus a nuisance. She tore the murderers away from the boy, but, alas she was too late, for the lad was dead. Murder, carefully plotted and brutally carried out, was, of course, common. And yet the people are intelligent and teachable, and with human feelings of a kind.



MALAGASY FOREST



CHILDREN OF A PAGAN VILLAGE

I was travelling along a veldt track when I was startled by shrieks and moaning among the long grass to my right. I instantly told the men to put down the chair and rushed to investigate. I found a woman rolling over and over, writhing as in mortal agony, groaning and sighing and sobbing and shrieking as though she were being torn to pieces on the rack. I lifted her up and asked what was the matter. She was terrified at the sight of me. Now the Bezanozans refuse to be quieted or calmed unless you actually wipe away their tears. This I proceeded to do, whereupon the woman was assured that I did not intend to murder her, and ceased her sobs. Her story was that she had lost her child, dear to her though a savage heathen woman, so she had come out on to the far veldt to wail the death-wail, the Malagasy death-wail, the most harrowing sound it has ever been my misfortune to hear. Two things distressed her: she was missing so tragically those baby fingers, wailing because a beloved little thing she had nourished had been snatched from her breast. And the other thing? According to Bezanozans belief, that baby spirit had now become an evil spirit, bent only on either striking the mother who bore it with terrifying disease, or more terrifying death, there being no such thing as death from natural causes.

Those were the people and the conditions which

the missionary had to meet. And a perfectly glorious task! Once having realized the condition of the people, do you wonder that the missionary could neither sit nor stand, much less take his ease, but must be on the road, destroying ruthlessly, but also building on Christ, that sure foundation? Baker, Peake's successor, working in the south, and I in the north, we were able to make the eleven churches which we found in the Bezanozano on our arrival into seventy-nine, and at the present time there is not a single inhabitant of that tribe into whose village the Gospel has not penetrated, or at least who is not within sound of the Gospel of Christ.

*Anativolo.*—To the west of Anjozorobe (our station village) there is a tribe called the Manendy, and their country the Anativolo, or "The Land of the Long Grass." The area is smaller and the tribe fewer in number than the Bezanozano. The name Anativolo to us is disgusting, but not to them because of their low mentality and morals. *Anaty* means "within," and *volo* "hair," that is: the inhabitants are compared to lice buried in their long, uncut, frizzy hair. Their country is an immense hollow among the mountains, chokingly hot, with swamps and lakes everywhere and mosquitoes in clouds. Hence it is almost a death-trap. More industrious than the Bezanozano, their industry was turned into channels of personal degradation. Their

intelligence and activity were employed much as the British or Continental crook uses them, only in a simpler way.

My predecessor had established four churches among the Manendy tribe, still "infants in arms," and then unable to crawl. I pioneered there and succeeded in making the four churches into twenty-five, with no possibility or need for further extension, the Anativolo now being churched from end to end. Moreover, I founded thirteen day schools among the Manendy, where previously there existed but two tiny "dame" schools, with fifty-five scholars all told. It is true to say that the churches and schools have revolutionized the whole tribe, and if one cannot say that it has been Christianized, or that "all things have become new," at least "old things have passed away"—dreadful things.

Beyond an annual visit and some superintendence by correspondence or interviews with the leaders, I have done absolutely nothing for the tribe, the work being prosecuted and controlled by themselves.

*Northern Imerina.*—Around the Anjozorobe station village there was also much to be done, for we had trekked far inland and northward. Disquieting events were much too common for us to be comfortable either in mind or spirit. Once when I was away on a journey, and my wife alone in the house

with the children, some wild folks invaded the garden, running round the house at dead of night, yelling, shrieking, dancing, even endeavouring to climb the veranda pillars. They may have been quite harmless idiots or they may not, for they disappeared as they came. On another occasion a terrifying creature entered the garden (during my absence *en tournée*), climbed a tree, where he remained the whole day, singing, shouting, making hideous faces and still more hideous noises, eyeing the house with furtive and menacing glances, but quietly decamping at nightfall.

Six miles south of the station a man ran amuck. There had been a bitter feud about the ownership of some rice fields. In the end one man sharpened his eighteen-inch blade until it was razor-keen, and then sallied forth. The heads of five of his enemies were severed clean. Six others were murdered, and many more slashed about faces and bodies until the brute himself was despatched.

As recently as November, 1934, in a village ten miles from the station, a witch doctor had been doing his incantations, and thought he had discerned something, whereupon he announced to the people that some enemy was proposing to attack them, and that they must make ready and strike quickly and surely when that somebody entered the village. Some months before a son of the village had re-

moved about twenty miles north. That evening, on his way to an administrative centre, this son turned from the high road to find a lodging with and visit his relatives in his home village. Everybody knew him; his parents were living there, but the word of the witch doctor had gone forth—an enemy was coming. The young fellow was seized by nine men and brutally done to death, after which they carried the mutilated corpse to the high road and deposited it there to give the impression that the man had been waylaid or overtaken and attacked at night when journeying south. Farther north villages were raided and then fired.

Unlike those who gain a living by "taking in each other's washing," the livelihood of many was obtained by stealing one another's cattle or pigs, they in turn re-stealing them, and with them, more. The making of strong drink, with a poisonous percentage of alcohol, was the livelihood of others, itself inciting people through its deadliness to murderous assault and battery, which again had to be avenged. Witchcraft was rampant, sorcery resorted to on any pretext or none, superstition and fear embedded in the peoples' natures like fossils in rock. These ghastly things repeated themselves with disturbing frequency. What then could the missionary do but tear round on perspiring journeys to preach the destructive, and yet constructive, because redeem-

ing, Gospel? There is now no corner in northern Imerina—where the Anjzorobe mission house stands—where another church need be founded.

## CHAPTER III

### A DOOR FLUNG WIDE

I PIONEERED in the southern part of the Sihanaka country, but that must be passed over because I am anxious to speak of the Marofotsy tribe, a full account of which would require a volume of a thousand pages. This was a tribe utterly unknown to the outside world (even of this island) until it was discovered to us, occupying a country 300 miles by 150, in hitherto untraversed and as yet unsurveyed Madagascar.

The Marofotsy tribe is a strange mixture of undesirables and explosive elements, such as one might expect of the children of gangsters, married to the offspring of beachcombers and native women of loose character. The foundation of the Marofotsy is Sihanaka stock, which, about 130 years ago, rebelled against the King of Madagascar and fled, trekking to a far and uninhabited land, now known as the Marofotsy country. These were joined by criminals who fled from justice, and slaves who fled from their masters, both of whom only sought a niche in which to hide. These gradually formed them-

selves into a tribe; out of such material what could you expect but evil of every form and at its worst?

I possess a detailed history of this tribe, written by a real Marofotsy, a fascinating story and terrible. The individual Marofotsy only lived for cock-fighting and bull-fighting, himself often the gladiator; to raid and fight and slaughter and steal cattle; to fill his stomach with food, to quench his unquenchable thirst with murderous alcohol, and indulge his animal passions. All the above are still rife. It was a land and a tribe unknown, a land nobody would have wished to know, a people with whom no one would have desired intercourse, in fact the legend of the great rebellion and trek westward, more than a hundred years previously, seemed to have been forgotten altogether.

The occupation of Madagascar by the French took place in 1895, but, for more than a decade, even they seem to have been ignorant of the tribe; it was only recently that French officials were stationed there, and at the time of writing they only numbered two, and the whole area, bigger than Wales, could boast of but one post office. No real attempt has been made to survey the country, and, as yet, no serious effort to govern or elevate it. It is the simple truth to say that I am still the only European who knows the country. There are four European gold diggers within the Marofotsy, but not a single

colonist. Europeans have visited it at various points, but no one except myself has explored it.

The story of how I came to enter the Marofotsy country is both interesting and illuminating. I was pioneering among the Bezanozano tribe, my wife being alone at the station. One day, during my absence, she was pottering about among her veranda plants when a weird creature, clad only in a loin-cloth, with a tousled head of hair, lithe, lean, black as midnight, wild, fearsome and fearful, appeared at the mission house. He prostrated himself flat upon his stomach before my wife in utter obeisance. Not a bit scared, she begged the man to rise. She asked him who he was, and was told.

She asked him where he came from, and he answered: "The Marofotsy country."

"But where is that?"

"It is beyond those far mountains, three-and-a-half days' journey from here."

"What do you want?"

"I have been sent by my tribe to you to beg for a teacher. We had heard that there was a praying *vazabalaby* (European) in Anjozorobe and we wish to be taught the 'praying.'"

Staggered and almost overcome, my wife took the man into my study, asking him to be seated, but as he had probably never seen a chair, he dare not trust himself to that strange household necessity, so

squatted on the floor. They talked round the subject for some time, the English lady and the raw savage, a great picture and worthy of a large canvas. Presently the savage presented my wife with a dirty, torn, crumpled, dog-eared scrap of paper, with a few almost illegible crosses upon it in pencil.

“What is this?” inquired my wife.

“That is our petition asking for a church and a teacher,” he replied; not a name on it, not a single letter.

The Englishwoman’s eyes became dim and overflowed. Fool that I was, I destroyed that scrap of paper, when it ought to have become the most precious of all my possessions, in spite of its filthiness. Instantly my wife gave the man assurance that I, the missionary, would visit them, and that they should have a church and a teacher. At that the man literally bolted, away back to his people to tell them that I was coming.

When I returned from my journey east of the forest, my wife thought that she had great and amazing news for me. Though amazing it was anything but glad news, for we missionaries had recently had orders from home forbidding us to extend, rather to retrench, as there was a debt of £66,000 at the Mission House in London.

“It is no good, my dear,” I said, “I must not, I dare not, go.”

"But you must, for I have promised," argued my wife.

I sat tight and did nothing because I could do no other—or thought so.

About two months later the man came again to know why the *vaxabalaby* (myself) had not been. Again I was away from home. Once more my wife promised that I would visit them and they should have a church and a teacher. I sat tight, unable to budge—or thought so. He came a third time, and once more he failed to catch me at home. He returned with a renewed promise. I still sat tight, but with a heart like lead, aching to go but remembering explicit orders from home. He came a fourth time and again I was in the Bezanozano country. My wife was even more emphatic in her assurance that I would go out to the Marofotsy country, and that they should have both church and teacher. My despair when I returned and heard made me unbearable. He came a fifth time and caught me at home, the one person I did not wish to see, except out of curiosity, almost hating the man for his persistence and yet loving him for it. It was heroic; it was magnificent! I took him into my study and we sat there to talk the thing through. I wanted to bid him go about his business, and yet I also wanted to hug him, for was not his business my business?

Here was a man sent by his people to beg for the

Gospel. I was not thrusting at a closed door; he was flinging a door wide open, which I wished to enter and dare not. It is maddening to find a door you fain would enter, closed, bolted and barred against you; it is far more maddening to find a door open as the heavens and inviting you, and yet to see an invisible, imperious notice hitting you in the eye, saying: "Out of Bounds!"

That man, by the time he got back home, would have done thirty-five days on foot, across lonely mountains, to ask for the Gospel of Christ, and yet, according to my orders, I must refuse him. I could scarcely speak. That is what debts at Mission Houses in Great Britain mean to missionaries out in the field. The pleading and persistence of this man could no longer be denied; now, in spite of orders, I dare not refuse to go. And I went. I founded a church in his village, my first in that wide, terrible land. For years and years after my arrival in Madagascar there was not a single church of any kind in the whole Marofotsy country, now there are 108.

In 1918 I set out to explore an unknown land and to plant churches. I saw things, things I could not have believed had not my own eyes seen them and my own ears heard them; a land inundated by the most virulent and devastatingly poisonous drink; a tribe saturated with disease due to unrestrained immorality (and they unconscious that it was im-

moral); feuds that resembled devil-possession; polygamy everywhere the accepted custom; sorcery employed by all and sundry to strike with disease and death; charms supposed to be able to bewitch and destroy; death-dealing poisons secretly dropped into a family water-pot, or surreptitiously slipped among the rice of the man with whom the murderer was eating; girls married at nine years of age; the sick, and especially the aged, flung out of the houses of their children and left to die; wee girls, little more than babies, ravished. I am not exaggerating, but can give names of people and places in every instance in verification. In addition the whole country was over-run by bandits (banditry is still rife), whose one purpose in life was to raid and slaughter. The bureau of the *Chef du Poste* at Andriamena is within fifty yards of his residence, and yet that was raided and 40,000 francs stolen.

Recently a native official, when in the country tax collecting, was seized by nine bandits, belaboured into unconsciousness, and then robbed of 25,000 francs. Recently, also, when on a journey, I heard that the village of Anosimiarina had been raided. I knew what that meant, so laid aside my itinerary and made straight for it. With forced marches, we reached it in two days. There I found nine people who had been badly mauled, one had his head cut open in three places, and the knee of one poor

woman was completely torn off by a ferocious blow from a cudgel. I stayed and doctored them until on the road to recovery, happily none died. At Beva-zaha, a woman near her confinement was caught by the bandits, and immediately disembowelled.

On my very last journey we passed a smoking village which had been raided and then fired. At another, two days before I reached it, the bandits had attempted a raid, but had been driven off and a bandit caught. This delightful creature was carried bound and in triumph to the village (Ankaramanga) and put to death, how, is too dreadful to recount. When dead, the women fell upon the body in a frenzy and literally tore the flesh from his bones. The morning I arrived, a note had been brought into the village to say that the raiders were returning in full force to avenge the death of their comrade. That night my men and I slept in the open; they insisted in sleeping around me for protection, and all of us were ready to spring to our feet and assist the villagers in case of attack. In another village I was ordered to quit instantly, with a score or more of glittering, aggressive spear-heads within inches of my body. I stood my ground, however, and slept in the village, not leaving until the following morning, and that of my own free will.

I have had the horror of seeing women perfectly nude stalking about their villages. On my last

journey, pioneering in an unknown area, and holding a service, the very first time they had ever heard of Christ, a woman in the crowd broke in upon the solemnity of the occasion, and, bellowing, offered me her daughter as concubine. When I refused she wanted before all the people to insist that I took her for the night. One could fill a volume with such stories and incidents. Do not blame these people. Our own children would become queer creatures were no restraint exercised upon them, and no instruction given to them. Let us rather blame ourselves that 2,000 years have flown since Christ came, and yet, such has been our lethargy, or indifference or want of self-sacrifice or unwillingness to go forth, that scores of millions have not yet heard of a Saviour or His conquering power.

Here also is something which ought to reinforce our faith: never, in all my journeys during more than twenty-six years, have I stood before a group of the rawest savages and preached Christ to them, without finding an almost immediate acknowledgement that what I declared and taught was good and right, even though they may have been unwilling at the moment (or for years) to accept and follow it. Thus there is something within us which instantly responds to what is true, what is high, in a word, God, because we were made by Him Who is the Truth, and are His.

“We needs must love the highest when we see it.” That perhaps needs qualifying: “We needs must acknowledge that the highest is the highest when we see it.” That wild Marofotsy, tramping thirty-five days and making five journeys to the mission house in Anjozorobe, was acknowledging that “As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God.”

It has been my experience among some of the darkest and most ignorant people in this land, that, sooner or later they have had to give way, that, though they may have resisted for five, ten years, Christ and their bitter needs have conquered in the end. But even resistance, other than a mild hesitation, has been rare, whereas frequently it was I who was sought out to give them the Gospel of Christ.

There is one great story of my experience. When pioneering in a region I had not previously penetrated, I actually discovered a church which had been in existence eleven years. A man, having heard of Christ, in a far-away village, had returned home and told his fellows, who, there and then, in almost total ignorance of what Christianity is, met together to worship the Unknown God and the Unknown Christ, and this they have continued to do ever since.

## CHAPTER IV

### TACKLING THE PROBLEM

IN my last chapter I described the mental, moral, and physical condition of the peoples I discovered. Even a man with one eye and that one dim, could not fail to see that the conditions which prevailed were appalling. When a problem exists, the immensity of which is fully realized, there are three possible attitudes towards it: To run right away from it; to sit tight and ignore it; to tackle it. To run away from or ignore the people I had discovered, and to whom God had told me to minister, was unthinkable, and as reprehensible as the act of a motorist who has run down and murdered someone with his car, but who dashes away from the scene of the tragedy.

I set out, therefore, but had to acknowledge defeat. During my first five years in Madagascar the only thing I accomplished was the founding of one tiny day school; in numbers my churches had decreased by four; I had not even marked time, much less had I been able to establish one new cause, and the need so lamentable! I had not been inactive; I

had been thousands of miles in the chair, on foot, on the push-bike; I had visited hundreds of villages where such conditions prevailed as I have recounted, and yet I had nothing to show for my labours. I was greatly disturbed; had the Spirit departed from me? I was earnest enough, serious, but apparently I was accomplishing nothing. I sat down to review the situation from all sides, determined that, if I could not "get a move on" there was nothing for it but to move out—and home. Something was wrong; was it in myself or my methods? I was preaching earnest little homilies which were calculated to do no harm, but were certainly doing no good, at least they were bringing no one to Christ; there was no movement in the valley of dry bones. I had not, in spite of prayer and untiring energy, found my point of contact. The people where I pioneered had no use for me; they fled at my approach, especially when they had once heard one of my homilies, scarcely a word of which they understood, though the address was in intelligible and idiomatic Malagasy. To them I was only uttering words, but not getting thoughts and teaching home, because I was discoursing of things unintelligible as far as they were concerned. Geographically I had discovered the approach to remote and hidden villages; mentally and spiritually I had not yet discovered the approach to the native mind and soul.

The first thing was to get the people round me by hook or by crook, for you can do nothing with an empty village, any more than the home minister with empty pews. So I sent to England for a gramophone and records, stipulating the kind of records I wanted. I also wrote to Sunday School superintendents begging them to send me their rolls of Scripture pictures when used. I studied medicine (very superficially) and bought a stock of medicines sufficient to fill a large tin box. I had changed my tactics. I discarded my homily altogether, except that I occasionally preached to people who had some knowledge of the rudiments of the Gospel, though even then I employed the gramophone and pictures.

I likewise gave myself anew to the native language, for, though I had passed my language examinations, I had become satisfied with a certain facility in speaking Malagasy. Now I had noticed one thing: when I employed a Malagasy proverb the people pricked up their ears, were all attention, and smiled. Moreover that proverb had more power with them than the use of Scripture; the proverb they knew, while the text probably conveyed little to them. It was up to me, however, to give the proverb I quoted a moral and spiritual application. Madagascar is probably the richest in proverbs of any country in the world; missionaries have collected 4,000 and have had them printed in

book-form to preserve them. Realizing how pregnant in possibilities the free use of native proverbs may be (and was) I familiarized myself with hundreds. I was not sure that I should succeed where previously I had failed; at any rate I had scrapped whatever other methods I had employed, and with fresh hopefulness sallied forth. As before, many who saw me for the first time fled, scared at the sight of a white face, while those I had visited previously left me with nothing but a view of bare backs as they suddenly bethought themselves of something needing to be done, I and my bearers being thus left in possession of an empty village. Some, again, unable to escape, shut themselves within their huts.

I was familiar with this experience, so out came the gramophone (one with a trumpet of unusual size). This was placed on a couple of my tin boxes, wound up and set going, the first record always being a rousing band-piece, as noisy and jazzy as I possessed. The sound carried far, evidently, for presently I saw windows opened half an inch or so, and startled eyes peeping awestruck, also people walking hastily from the valleys, to flop on all fours and hide behind bushes and trees as they came into fuller view. Without making a sign of any kind I put on record after record.

At length I would give them a laughing record,

preferably one of Harry Lauder's. That they could not resist; fearfully they crept gradually nearer. Discourteous people who had banged doors in my face opened them and stepped out gingerly, and, seeing others moving towards the gramophone, they proceeded also. At first they kept their distance, scared lest the thing might explode. Then I would give them Harry Lauder's "Tickle Geordie" or "Stop your tickling, Jock!" Presently there would be a guffaw and an explosion, when everyone would give vent to suppressed laughter, letting themselves go without restraint. Then I would give them a record of birds and animals such as "Sunrise on a Surrey Farm," or an unaccompanied quartette. By that time I had got them in the hollow of my hand; they were assembled before me and in a happy mood, also assured that the thing would not burst and blow them sky-high. Then I set to work.

I first of all held a record in my hand and explained that the voice was in the disc and not in the "box". My first clumsy old gramophone was one in which you could lift the lid and the "works" stood revealed. This I raised and pointed out the motor.

"You see this plate; the record is placed on that; the motor only makes it revolve, but there is no voice or music. Come round and look; I will wind the thing up and set it going."

They crane their necks to see the inside of the "box" and crush each other until I am afraid for my gramophone. They are still a bit scared lest the thing should burst. They have got hold of the idea that the "box" is only case and machine, and voiceless of itself, therefore the voice must be in the record. While the thing is working their eyes wander from the record to my mouth, thinking, perhaps, that I am "having" them, and that it is only ventriloquism after all. I detect their thought and so chat away to them while the record is being played; finally they are convinced.

They are beholding something absolutely new and are both fascinated and bewildered. Still holding the record, I assure them again that the voice is within the disc.

"You hear my voice speaking, don't you?"

"Yes," they reply.

"Do you see it?"

"No."

"Sound," I say, "is one of those things you are convinced exists because you hear it, but never see."

"Yes, we understand that," they reply.

I am enjoying myself and so are they. "Now, though invisible, sound writes itself upon the air, and there is a way of seizing that sound and imprisoning it in this record; here is the writing," whereupon I scrape the record with my finger nail,

passing it across the grooves. They grasp that also. They no longer think I am an ogre. "The voice, then, is in the record; I will prove it. I will put the record on the plate, fix a needle into the arm, and, the moment the needle touches the record you will hear music and singing and speaking." They do not understand a word, the language of the record being either English or French; nowadays one can buy Malagasy records, every word of which is intelligible to them, and thus far more convincing.

I continue: "The person who is now singing to you lives seven or eight thousand miles away, and yet you have heard his voice here in Bevoay; you have never seen him and never will see him. Some of the people who have sung and spoken to you are dead, and yet their voices are still heard."

That awes them, frightens them, as their minds immediately travel to the spirits of their ancestors and other spirits terrifyingly malignant, which they believe surround them to injure or destroy.

I do not buy up the opportunity in an endeavour to explode such beliefs, but turn it saying: "This dead person sings beautifully to you, amuses you, charms you; nothing is father from his thought than to injure you," thereby getting home an idea that there are good spirits, which again is new to them.

## CHAPTER V

### THE UNKNOWN GOD

THIS bit of teaching has slipped in and taken root and is good. "Someone far away and invisible has sung to you, spoken to you," I continue, "you have been astonished; isn't it wonderful?"

"Yes," they reply, "the foreigner must be God!"

I have been waiting for that word "God". They always say the same: "The foreigner must be God."

"Would you be surprised," I ask, "if I were to tell you that God has written a book! You know about God, don't you?"

"What, God, the Creator of our hands and feet, written a book?"

"Yes!" I then hold up my Bible. "This is God's Book; it is called *Ny Tenin Andriamanitra* (The Word of God)." At this they are not only astounded, but they gape to demonstrate it. "The words of God are in this book; His voice is also here, and if you will only listen to it you will hear it, not with the ear, however, but with the heart. The voice in this record only pleases the ear, but the voice in this

Book changes and purifies the heart. You know what one of your proverbs says: 'The ugly face cannot be changed, but the spirit which is evil can.' Listen and I will read to you from God's book," whereupon I read them a Psalm or the story of the Prodigal Son or the chapter on Love.

The missionary has not to convince the Malagasy of the existence of God; they believe that as firmly as the missionary himself. It was long ere I in my blindness seized upon that conviction as a point of contact, or made it a starting point. Through the gramophone I had drawn a frightened, reluctant people around me. Through the record I had got the acknowledgment that the voice of an invisible being far away could be and had been heard by them. Their thought of God in their primitive state is of a Being infinitely powerful, but infinitely remote. I had convinced them that God had written a book, for had I not read to them from that book? They had heard the voice of someone in the far west; they had also heard the voice of God from the far heavens. I have carried them along with me though they are bewildered.

I continue the conversation about God, not yet introducing the name of Christ. "You know that there is a God, don't you?" I ask. "Now let me tell you what you know about Him from your own proverbs." As an evidence that God has not left

Himself without a witness in any country, there are dozens of Malagasy proverbs about the Divine Being. I continue thus: "One of your proverbs says: 'God does not love that which is evil.' Another says: 'God does not belong to me alone. He is the God of everybody.' Another says: 'God judges between me and my enemies.' Another says: 'God cannot be given blame, the Supreme Being cannot be reproached, it is we human beings who are always changing.' Another says: 'The simple are not cheated because God is feared.' Another says: 'God lives on high and so can look down and see what is hidden.' Another says: 'Do not think you can go into a deep dark valley and do evil, for God can see right over the hill and discern what you are doing in secret.' "

My study of their proverbs is now coming in useful. I then analyse these proverbs and drive home what they teach about God one by one. I am on familiar ground to them, which I should not be were I flinging texts of Scripture at them. And yet, through them I am teaching what the Scriptures teach. By this time I have reached a most important point.

It were the simple truth to assert that the heathen Malagasy has little or no conception of sin as we understand it. Now there can be no need for a Saviour where there is no sense of sin, and that I

must create somehow. Sin with the heathen Malagasy is not breaking the moral law, but breaking the *taboo*, such as eating pork or onions or certain vegetables, or working on a forbidden day, all of which have been declared by their ancestors, through the witch doctor, to be *fady* or forbidden. If they are disobeyed the spirits will be incensed and repay a thousand-fold in crop failures, anthrax among the cattle, barrenness in the wife, the death of children, epidemics, disease and death. Sin is thus breaking the law of the tribe, which may not touch the moral law at any point. The heathen Malagasy may lie, steal, commit adultery, hate, even murder, and no reproach attaches to him, but let him eat goat's flesh, or certain wholesome greens, or work on a *taboo* day, and he has imperilled the whole village or tribe by having infuriated the spirits. In 1919, during the influenza epidemic, even children were offered as sacrifices to stay the plague, so inexorable were the spirits (so it was thought) that the usual offerings, a cockerel, an ox, or even a cow with a calf, were insufficient to appease their wrath.

It will be seen from the proverbs quoted that there is a fundamental belief among the Malagasy in the existence of God, a valuable starting point for the pioneering missionary, for he can take that for granted without reservation. There are also certain attributes of the Almighty known to them, every

one of which can be seized to hammer home some pertinent truth. But even then you may leave them almost totally ignorant as to what constitutes evil; however, you have brought them to a point from which to launch vital instruction as to its real nature, and so create the necessary sense of sin.

“Here is God’s book,” I say: “you are all wrong as to what makes sin, sin. According to the Word of God there is no sin in eating pork or onions or working on a *taboo* day—listen!” Then I read them the Ten Commandments and other passages. “The thing you do in that deep dark valley is sin: adultery: cattle stealing, murder, or lying, harbouring hatred in your hearts. ‘He that hateth his brother is a murderer.’”

I have told them things to stagger them, and in fear they exclaim: “Then we are wrong before the Great Spirit. The lesser spirits can be vindictive, but if we have *Andriamanitra* (God) for an enemy, how much greater is our peril and woe?”

They are now alarmed, not through any love of God, but through fear. Out comes the roll of Scripture pictures, for now I must tell them about Jesus the Saviour, Jesus the Forgiver, the Redeemer from sin, Jesus the One Who empowers to conquer, Jesus the One Who not only forgives and cleanses, but also addeth grace to grace in character and spirit.

I never take a roll of Old Testament pictures with

me, but always of the four Gospels. They are brightly coloured and so attractive to the heathen Malagasy, most of whom have never in their lives seen a picture of any kind. I relate the stories of these pictures, every one so strangely new to them. They stand there as though glued to the spot. No need to say: "Friends, countrymen, lend me your ears" or eyes. I can twist them round my little finger by this.

"Here is the Saviour from the sins of which you have been unconsciously guilty," I say. I tell them of the Incarnation, right on to His death and Resurrection. It defeated me for a long time how to get the idea of the Atonement into their heads until one day a native, seeing my embarrassment, shouted and gave me the clue and the right idiom. I then discovered that the Malagasy were familiar with the idea of one person taking upon himself the guilt of another and suffering for it.

I wish some artist would paint a set of pictures of the Christ and His story, not as a white man. From such pictures as I possess, all the Malagasy of the interior tribes think that He is a European, and that I am teaching them to pray to one of my ancestors. On my last journey I was asked if the Virgin Mary was an Englishwoman.

I have been able to lead them step by step to the realization of a sense of sin, and on to a Saviour from sin, or at least to a recognition that what they

have accounted evil is not evil at all. I have tried to show them that God is not a spy, though He sees the hidden and knows, but that He is a Father, and Love, something in the character of God they have never conceived, and of which there is no trace in any of the native proverbs about Him.

Now comes the critical moment: "Would you like to have a church and learn more about God and this Jesus; to know what is really sin that you may not be wrong before Him, and about the way of salvation and eternal life?"

"Yes," an eager "Yes!" is generally the response, for they have heard strange things and wish to hear more. Then, out comes the sheet of paper; every name is taken, together with their ages and the name of their village. With ten adult signatures (or crosses in lieu of them) French law permits worship in a hut; with eighty the erection of a church, so that the tiniest village may have its cottage meeting, even though the inhabitants are too few for the building of a church to be sanctioned. It is I who deal with the French Government, though the people themselves must submit to an official *enquête*.

This proceeding is a long strenuous task, but a joyous one. I am generally limp before the last signature is taken. And then every house must be visited and the sick ministered to from the medicine box. They realize at length that the missionary is not

so terrible as his face may have led them to suppose. Bonds of attachment have been made, and they ask when he will be round again. Generally the "singing-box" has to be given once more. We have got our foot in; a start has been made; we have family prayers (strange that a man should talk so familiarly with the Great Spirit!); the people from that hour have begun the march to Immanuel's Land.

## CHAPTER VI

### OPENING A WINDOW

THOSE who have read the preceding chapters on this subject will probably ask: "But how do you work these new causes?"

Strictly speaking, I do not. I cannot visit them more than once a year at most.

"Because the people are so terribly ignorant, are not these new causes still-born?"

Now it is an extraordinary thing that they are never still-born, neither do they die—with very, very rare exceptions. They may not flourish for years; they may be, as the Malagasy say, *tsy maty, tsy velona*, "not dead, not alive," but they rarely, if ever, expire. Why? They have met an elemental need—"Thou hast made us for Thyself and we cannot rest until we rest in Thee." I repeat; never have I been anywhere in heathen Madagascar, or faced a crowd of the rawest savages, without an acknowledgment that what was taught was right, something unquestionable because self-evident truth. *Eny, marina izany*, they exclaim: "Yes, that is true!"

Here I wish to mention something which startled me and drove me to very serious reflection. It is my practice to gather all the information I can about the customs, beliefs and histories of the various villages and regions where I am working. Pastors and evangelists are asked to interrogate the people (without being inquisitive) and to write out the material for me, knowing that what prevails in this area is likely to be true of others. I have before me one such account; I will translate parts of it.

When an inhabitant of Mandanivatsy wishes to fulfil a vow he has made to the spirits, he visits the sorcerer to inquire which will be a lucky day. Being told, he pays his fee and then goes round the neighbourhood, telling the people that he is about to fulfil his vow, and asks them to attend on a certain day. The day arrives. He selects the finest of his oxen and leads it to an ancestral tomb, where the ox is thrown and bound. Then a chief makes a palaver announcing the reason for the gathering, for everybody is assembled for the ceremony. The chief in a loud voice exclaims: "So and so is going to fulfil his vow to the spirits, for whoever makes a vow and fails to fulfil it will be taken ill. Listen ye ancestors, and thou holy fatherland, and ye ancient *Vaximbas* (aborigines), and all ye gods, and the great God of all—bless the day, bless the night, for ye are the ones to whom we look for benefits and protection."

The Great Spirit is invoked. A mental note is made of that; the missionary has got something really important in hearing that invocation.

While the ox is being bound, another chief rises to speak, and, while speaking, pulls the tail of the ox backwards and forwards, saying: "I call upon the male and female gods to attend this sacred ceremony. I call upon the god of the *sodifafana* plant (*Bryophyllum proliferum*) to grace the occasion, for, though cut down it does not die, and though dug up and flung to a distance, it still takes root and grows. We beseech thee to appear for thou art a good god."

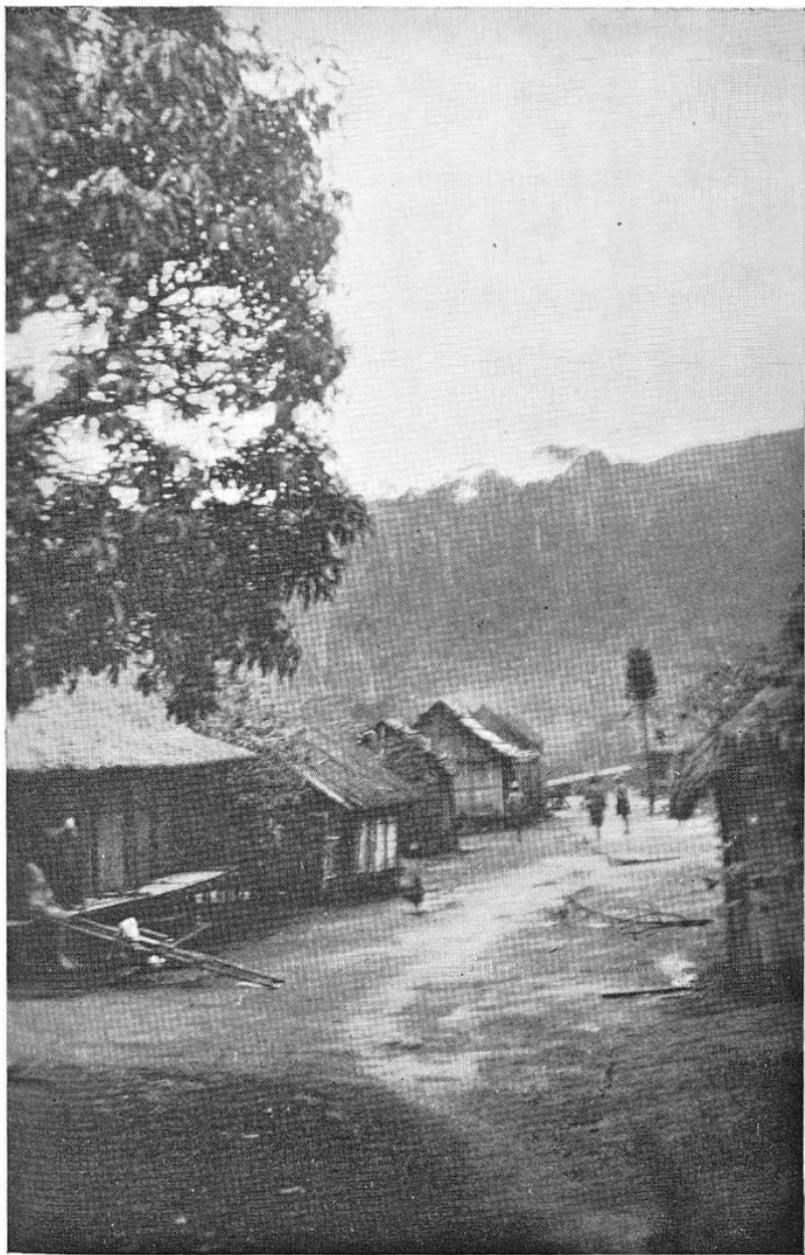
The missionary has made another mental note.

The chief continues: "I call upon the god of the rocks to come, for, though the heat is great the rocks are not scorched; though buried they do not crumble; though lying above ground they endure for ages—come, for thou art a good god!"

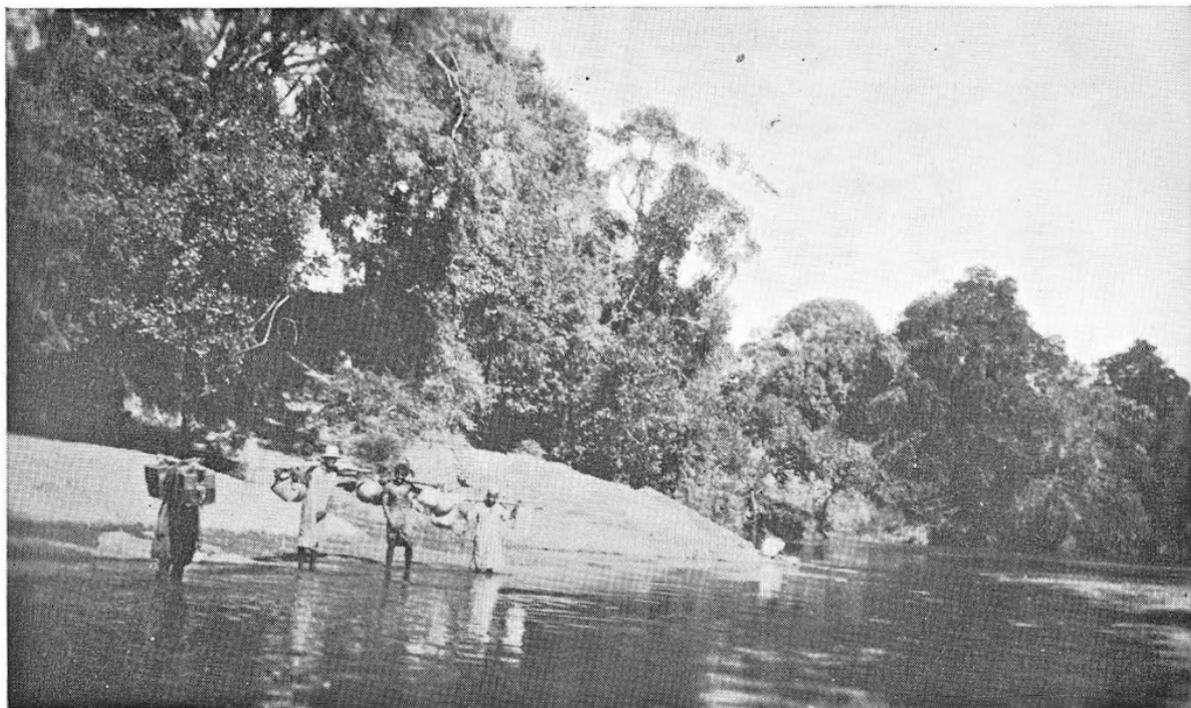
Again the missionary finds something useful.

"I call upon the god of the banana tree," says the chief, "for, though transplanted it does not wither; though uprooted it refuses to perish; though smitten by the cold it is not blighted, and though struck by the sun it is not blasted—come, for thou art a good god!"

The ears of the missionary are quick to detect something pertinent in that also.



VILLAGE IN A FOREST CLEARING



THE MISSIONARY'S BAGGAGE CROSSES A RIVER

"I summon the god of the cuckoo, for thou art a bird beautifully marked, having a speckled coat; when thou leavest thou dost not borrow things thou dost not intend to return; when thou comest again thy appearance does not startle; for seven months thou art not seen, but when thy cry is heard we believe thy word—come, for thou art a good god!" The missionary has found something interesting there also.

"I call upon the god of the *fitatra* (a species of warbler—*Pratincola sybilla*) to honour us with his presence, for he wakes the sleeping; he stirs up the lazy; he encourages the industrious—come, for thou art a good god!" "That's all right," says the missionary to himself.

"I call upon the god of the cardinal bird; grey in winter; scarlet in summer, dressed in garments which thou dost not share with wife and children—keep away from this assembly for thou art a bad god!" The missionary is not slow to see possibilities in that when pioneering and scouting for a point of contact.

"I call upon the god of the bottle-bird (*Centropus Tolou*). When thou fliest thou dost not cross the valley, but plungest amid the scrub, not daring to show thy face; moreover, thou wearest a loin-cloth not woven by thy wife, hence there is something shady about thee—keep away from this gathering

for thou art a bad god!" A fool could see something to lay hold of there.

In the above we have seen something typically native, definitely heathen, but a ceremony sacred and serious. The missionary, however, does not read such a story with amusement, or dismiss it as something stupid; he rather sees in it something he can lay hold of with both hands earnestly and use almost everywhere when pioneering. At the village of Mandanivatsy itself it was the above information and his use of it that eventually brought the people to the delicate point of signing the necessary petition, and the founding of the church there.

My readers will not be slow in grasping the implications of this worship of their ancestors; this calling upon certain gods; these sacrifices of oxen and the rest. It is evidence of an ingrained belief in a future life of some kind or other; the "dead" are still alive somewhere, and both active and powerful. If one could tell even the semi-ignorant something new about the future life, who would not listen with both ears and tense attention? On the question of the life hereafter I have great news to impart. I am not able in a few words to dissipate age-long fear, deep in their natures; fears about the departed—transformed into malignant spirits, seeking the undoing of the living, out to inflict the most agonizing diseases, or to strike dead in a moment—but I

can and do sow a seed-thought which will germinate. And do they not invoke the Great Spirit to attend their gathering? That gives me a unique opening to speak about, not a God who is creator merely, but a Father, and a loving Father. I am standing on Mar's Hill talking to the people about the Unknown God whom they ignorantly comprehend and never worship.

These invocations prove that the heathen has done some thinking, and that likewise there is a mind which in some measure has its distinctions in conduct. This faint differentiation leads to conversation about the essentially good and the indisputably bad, followed by the setting forth of Him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. In all the above they have opened windows, small perhaps, through which I have climbed myself to throw doors wide open to let in the fuller light, that every chamber of mind and soul might be flooded with the healthier air from the hills of God. I have thus been able to tackle the people on their own ground, and from the standpoint of their own beliefs, and in this way to bring them to the point of fixing their names or crosses to a petition to be presented to the French Government, asking for permission to begin worship, which has resulted in more than 200 new Christian causes being started in hitherto heathen tribes.

If I, after more than twenty-six years in a heathen

land, and now approaching the veteran stage, may presume to offer a word of counsel to those beginning their work, it would be this: spend a year, or two or three, studying minutely the native, his mind, his beliefs, his customs, his mode of living, his language and legends and literature (if there is one) until your own mind is saturated with them. It should be *taboo* to allow European standards, habits of thought, ways of living (except where some unquestionable moral principle is at stake) to determine what attitude we missionaries should take, what methods we should follow. It would be far better to endeavour to discover just where the heathen stands, what he thinks, what he believes, what is the compelling factor behind and within any line of conduct, and from these discoveries you will probably have an "alphabet" out of which you can form "words" and construct a "language." On his own tragically low level, you will always find something you can seize by which to lead him to higher ground.

## CHAPTER VII

### SEEKING A LEADER

To retrace our steps a little. The reader may say: "You have brought the people to the point of agreeing to gather for worship; you have obtained authorization from the Government, permitting them to start a cottage meeting or to build a church in their village, now what do you do next? You, as a missionary, cannot remain with them, and they are totally ignorant; are not those new causes therefore mostly still-born, or do they not die of inanition within a month?"

I answer: "No!"

"Then what do you do?" the reader asks.

Almost invariably in every village or group of villages which the new cause serves, there is some man of character, of stronger or clearer mind than the majority; he has already come to the front in village affairs; he is a natural leader, in a simple, primitive way, but a leader. In conversation about introducing the "praying" into their village his voice has mostly been heard, and it is he generally

who signs first; others wait until they see what he thinks and does, and when his name goes down, theirs go down as a matter of course. For years I have been striving to get an entrance into a village called Fiandanana. The rank and file wish to have a church, but the strongest man in the village is opposed to it, probably because he is a sorcerer. Until I have won him or he dies, there is "nothing doing" at Fiandanana. Now whether that village leader is ignorant or not, whether he can read and write or not, *he* is the man to seize and appoint as leader of the new cause. Someone to lead and so get the cause established; this is the first task, whatever the character of the leader be. That being accomplished, later (and generally very soon) matters of moral and spiritual import can be placed on a right basis.

"But though a natural leader in a simple way, the man is as yet ignorant of the A B C of Christianity; all he knows is what he has heard from you to-day," the reader says, "what then?"

On the evening of the day they have signed the petition I gather them all together and teach them a hymn, the Lord's Prayer, and also how to pray. Generally the leader soon picks up both words and tune of the hymn, and if he does not get hold of the right wording of the Lord's Prayer, he has got the gist of its petitions. The Malagasy, too, love

singing; almost every night when the day's work is over and the evening meal eaten, they gather for a sing-song. They are thus quick in picking up a tune and their vocal chords are always in good fettle. And if not, the missionary must find a way somehow.

What has been described above is enough for a beginning. "But if there is no such leader," the reader asks, "how do you proceed?" Let me illustrate from an experience.

I had started a cause at Ambodifiakarana; it languished because there was no leader. What then? I had tried to teach them a hymn, but nobody had got hold of either words or tune. They "sang" it to me. It sounded as though twenty people were endeavouring to sing parts of "Come ye thankful people, come," and "The Voice that breathed o'er Eden," and "Christians Awake" to the tune of Old Hundredth. They were not even making a joyful noise before the Lord, much less singing. However, they were praising God; they were also praying by means of that hymn. I taught them the hymn afresh.

I asked them to repeat the Lord's Prayer; it was a prayer, but it was not the Lord's Prayer. I then tried to teach them to pray for themselves individually. Then I asked someone to stand up and pray for us collectively. They were mightily scared. None of them had ever done such a thing. They did

not know how to proceed. They were nearly frightened out of their wits at the thought of hearing their own solitary voices leading the devotions in that cottage. No one rose. What next?

"You, Dadabe, please stand up," I said. Tremblingly, as if about to be executed, he rose. "Now," I said, "repeat after me." And so I taught him to pray in public and what to say: about the simplest things of their everyday lives.

It was infinitely touching, making me gulp as I heard an old heathen stammeringly repeating what I said. But it was beautiful also, a bit of work after the Master's own heart. Then I said to them: "You really know how to pray. Do you not gather to cry to your ancestors, asking them for this and that, begging for protection? Can you not pray to the Great Spirit in the same way? Of course you can!" That was the beginning. The village produced a leader at length; they quickly built both church and day school.

Very frequently, also, almost always, there is someone who can read, though indifferently. If there is such a one, though I allow the natural leader to lead, I give or send this one a Bible and hymn-book; he is to read the Bible to the people and teach them the words of the hymns.

To illustrate again: In one village where I had got them to sign a petition I made a discovery.

There was a girl of about twenty from a village across the mountains where there had long been a church. In visiting I entered the home of this girl. With immense pride and some self-importance, from a basket she fished out an old, dirty, torn hymn-book. She had neither Bible nor Testament. She could read haltingly. She knew a number of hymns, also the Lord's Prayer. That was enough; I had found a leader for the infant church born that morning. I sent a Bible and a new hymn-book. They gathered for worship every Sunday, and on my return the following year they already knew a score of hymns by heart; they could all recite the Lord's Prayer; the Bible had been read at every service and often in between. It was as real a church as St. Paul's Cathedral. Very soon they called a pastor of some training and supported him without any grant from the mission. In fact, throughout the Marofotsy country, with its 108 churches and many schools (except a small grant towards my itinerating) the London Missionary Society is not involved in any expense whatever.

To illustrate again. After ten years of persistent "bombardment," Andravola, that Benares of the Marofotsy country, capitulated completely. Only one man in the entire neighbourhood could read and write, but, alas! he was Andravola's most famous witch doctor, and naturally vehemently

opposed to the introduction of the "praying." Moreover he was a polygamist.

I visited him. His person was loaded with fetishes. His hut was encumbered with the sorcerer's stock in trade. I talked to him. How I talked to him! I brought him to the point of consenting to be the leader of the infant cause, a bold thing to do, and possibly censurable. But "wisdom is justified of her children." He quickly became the husband of one wife, and their marriage was legalized. He destroyed all his fetishes. He repaired, re-roofed and whitewashed his own house, and presented it to the village as their church. He and his wife went miles to be prepared for church membership. He entered my pastoral school for training. He changed his name and now calls himself *Jean de Dieu*, or John of God. I laid siege to the man; he took hold and led the Church; Christ captured him.

Frequently, also, there is some man or woman, in a village where a cause is started, who has some knowledge of "the praying," perhaps from the central province where the Gospel has been established for more than one hundred years. I may discover that there is such a person; generally with pride they tell me of this themselves. They are cattle traders or rearers or small storekeepers. That is sufficient. They may be all wrong morally, probably are. I visit such a one. There is a serious talk.

"You know about the 'praying'?"

"Yes!"

"Were you a communicant?"

"Yes," or "No."

"Have you a Bible and hymn-book?"

"Yes," or "No."

"I am starting a Christian cause here, have you heard?"

"Yes!"

"These people are in utter darkness; you have been enlightened more or less," I say. "I lay it upon you as a solemn responsibility before God to take hold and teach these folks. You remember the words of Joseph to his brethren: 'God did send me before you to preserve life.' What if God sent you to this far-away village, not simply to trade and make money, but to help to make these people live? You may not have been all you ought to have been, we are all sinners, let us repent together, go down on our knees here and ask God to forgive us; after we rise you will give me the joy of telling me that you will live a clean life and do your utmost to teach these people and lead them to Christ." Almost without exception such folks are pulled up sharp and are re-born in leading the infant church.

## CHAPTER VIII

### WATERING THE SEED

IN the Marofotsy country there are four evangelists, all trained men supported entirely by the Malagasy Native Missionary Society. These each have charge of a certain area, somewhat extensive. Their duties are to hold services in these newly-founded churches, to teach singing, to read the Scriptures to the people and expound the Word of God, to give counsel and instruction to these ignorant leaders, to visit all the villages associated with these causes, so that they are not isolated units or orphans. These four, however, are the only outside paid workers; not one penny of their support comes from abroad, but by contributions from the Malagasy churches in the central province.

From my coming to Madagascar in 1908 I have resolutely preserved my mobility, because, being on the very frontier of heathenism, the appeal and pull of human need dragged me forth, and every fresh cause I could start would minister to that need, both physical and spiritual. There has never been any

lack of devotion or self-sacrifice on the part of my colleagues, who might be said to be tied to the routine of district work. Quite early in my missionary career, one man took on twenty-seven of the churches I had inherited from my predecessor, that I might be free to pioneer in the Bezanozano country. When again my five original churches in the Bezanozano had become forty-one, another missionary freed me from responsibility towards them that I might develop churches in the Marofotsy country. When, later, I obtained permission to move five days farther into the interior and found a station in that land, yet another missionary relieved me of my work among the Anativolo tribe.

During the last twenty years the London Missionary Society in Madagascar has taken over a slice of country four or five times the size of the area worked previously, even though the missionary staff is less to-day than then. Church planting—east, west and north, by the methods described above—has been essentially my work, and to that end mobility had to be preserved. I could not be tied to an institution, or what might be profitable labour in working and organizing a district.

My plan was to explore a fairly wide area, visit the larger villages first, starting churches in what might be called "strategic centres," because there was more likely to be someone who knew something

about the "praying," settled there for trade or cattle rearing. These could be pressed into service, with the promise of the Gospel taking root the more quickly and firmly in consequence.

These strategic churches founded, from each centre I thoroughly scoured the surrounding country, starting other causes in every village or group of villages. Every year I went farther and still farther afield, often into regions where no white man had preceded me. I left myself free to go in any direction the moment I learned that there were villages east, west or north, also to return to my station at will, for I had no itinerary. In 1928 I remained six months in the Marofotsy country, wandering hither and thither before I turned southwards and homewards, establishing forty-six new causes during that one journey.

As causes became more numerous, I made the churches in strategic centres—which were of necessity stronger and had had a little time to grow—into "mother churches," laying upon them the responsibility of nursing "newly-born infants" brought into the world through later pioneer journeys. Eventually I spread out more and more. Then the Native Missionary Society provided me with four evangelists, these all the time visiting and nourishing both "young mothers and babies."

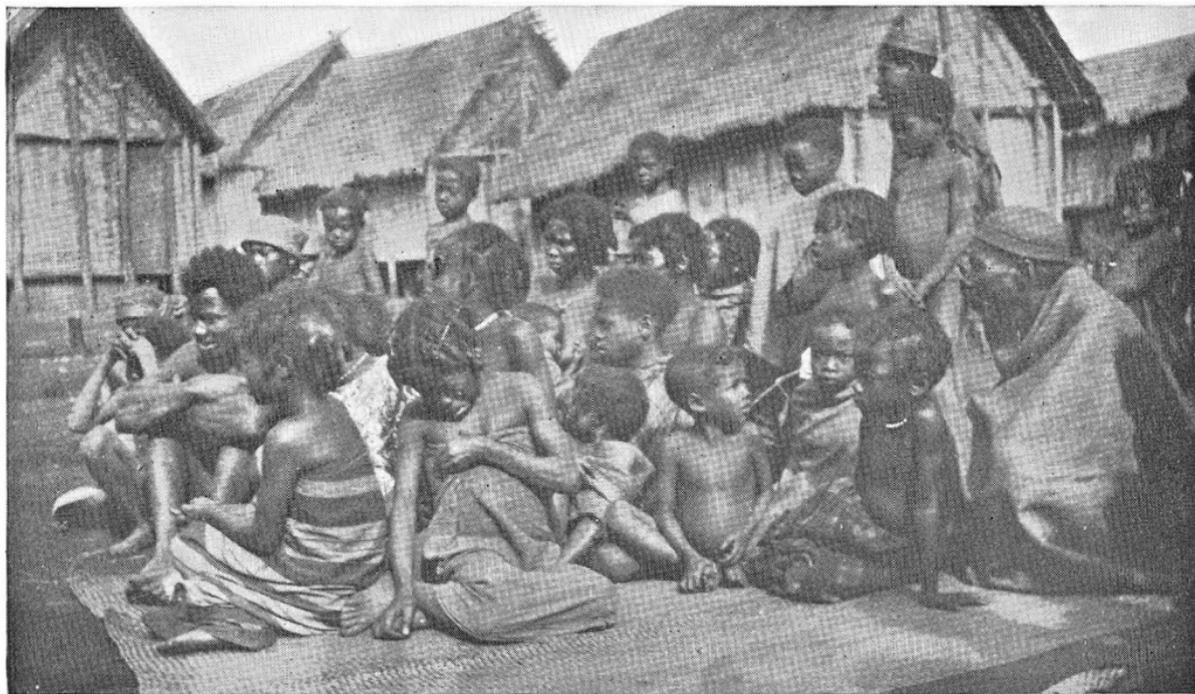
I then tried to lead them a step further by found-

ing what we call *Lobavolanas*, or monthly religious services on the Monday following the Sacramental Sunday, though as yet there were no communicants even in the "mother churches." These services are held at each of the churches in rotation, thus unifying causes within a small area. The object is comradeship in spiritual things, to destroy long-standing feuds, and also to make them realize that now they are "members one of another," and not isolated units. They must now "bear one another's burdens," the strong aiding the weak and making a contribution of life to the feebler causes. After each *Lobavolana* they all eat together, though it may only be manioc or sweet potato, for they are now one "family."

I then tried to lead them a further step forward by founding Synods, unifying and controlling all the churches under the charge of an evangelist. These Synods meet every four months at various churches in turn. They exercise almost the full authority which such an institution would have in the homeland. But my main object was not to invest a body with authority, though necessary. It was to unify peoples (widely scattered) in Christ and Christian service; to make the stronger churches accept responsibility for the weaker ones; to visit them, encourage, guide, admonish, settle quarrels; to link all together for financial help when needed, and for in-

struction such as itinerant preachers would be able to give through services or Sunday School classes; to make strong and weak realize that they were not self-dependent causes, but one body, united for the advancement of the tribe and the Kingdom of Christ.

I then sought to lead them a step further by forming a *Marofotsy Isan-Enim-Bolana*, or Six-monthly Meeting for the whole tribe, a kind of Church Congress or Congregational Union. This unifies all the churches throughout the whole of the Marofotsy country, and brings all the churches together, with each individual church under one central authority and consultative body. Such already has been the progress that, at the big Synod each six months, they muster, delegates and visitors, from 1,000 to 1,500 strong. It should be remembered that my first journey to the Marofotsy only took place in 1918. With this development, I, as missionary, have had little or nothing to do. I have pioneered and brought churches into being. I have visited them, some of them but once in five years. I founded the *Lobavolana*, Synods, and Six-monthly Meeting. I have given advice, helped by counsel, controlled and restrained a little, but I have really left them to work out their own salvation, to learn by experience and to profit by their mistakes. I have told them and reiterated it times without number, that the work is



A TYPICAL PAGAN AUDIENCE



THE VILLAGE ALTAR IN A PAGAN VILLAGE

theirs, that the missionary is but a stranger and cannot be a permanency.

To-day no part of the work in the Marofotsy country is controlled by any missionary or by the London Missionary Society; it has been taken over in its entirety by the Native Missionary Society. I live in that land; I visit the churches; I am still pioneering there, and, though I may have influence, I have no authority. Recently I sent a report to the Native Missionary Society about the untrustworthiness and laziness of an evangelist, suggesting that he should be dismissed; my suggestion was not accepted. I determined that the whole of this work should be controlled eventually and completely by the Native Missionary Society. Moreover, since the Six-monthly Meeting or Union of the whole of the Marofotsy churches was formed sixteen years ago, they have met thirty-two times; only on four occasions have I attended, and only twice have I consented to address the Assembly, refusing to permit them to lean upon the missionary. It was essential for them to tackle their own job both spiritually and financially.

A levy is made upon the churches for Union funds, from which day-school teachers each receive five shillings and threepence a month, but no other person or worker receives anything whatever, apart from the four evangelists, who are supported by the

Native Missionary Society in the central province. The work is entirely self-supporting, self-controlled, self-propagating. It is flourishing, that is, if you do not expect impossibilities, and remember that more than half the 108 churches are under ten years of age, some of them only born in 1934. The work is being done less efficiently than it would be if every church had a trained minister able to give his whole time to the ministry, but a coddled child becomes a nuisance and a weakling.

In a sense I have 150 churches in my prayerful care, covering an area almost as large as Scotland. I have also handed over more than seventy churches to other missionaries. I have planted and continued to plant more churches, and somehow they do not die, even though my visits to them can never be more than annual. What can a man do for a church if he only visits it once a year at most? Some have gone out of existence, but they did not die; that is to say, plague decimated a village, or it was abandoned, or it was fired by bandits, the church going up in flames with the rest. I have yet to attend the "funeral" of a church, even though I have been more than twenty-six years in Madagascar. Some have been at death's door, but they have been brought round again.

*If Madagascar could be given fifty perfectly mobile missionaries, distributed among the seven Protestant*

*missions working in the island; free to go anywhere, not tied down to district work or institutions or compelled to control organizations, but who could give themselves entirely to church-planting, the country could possibly be church-ed from north to south, from east to west, within a quarter of a century, and thus far would the Kingdom of Christ have come in Madagascar.* It can never come in any other way, for French law absolutely forbids open-air work of any kind, Christian worship can only take place in an authorized building, and Christian preaching and teaching can only be given there. Thus the Kingdom must come through the Church, and this can never be fulfilled without church-planting.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE VILLAGE OF THE EMACIATED GOGO

MAHIAGOGO is situated in a deep hollow among the hills, rather a trough or hole than a hollow. Mahia-gogo! *Mabia* means thin. The *gogo*—pronounced goo-goo—is a fish, but with a head so big in proportion to its body, and so flinty, that even the sharpest axe can scarcely cleave it; hence Mahia-gogo is “The Village of The Emaciated Gogo.” In the Marofotsy country the word *gogo* is employed as a simile. If a person is unusually pig-headed, so stubborn and self-willed that nothing can change him or bring him to reason, he is said to *milohan-gogo*, that is to have the head of a gogo. I should like to introduce the word into Great Britain as being far more expressive than the term pig-headed, because it defines a state of mind and spirit deeper and more stupid than even pig-headedness. It is the last word that “ticks off” concentrated, pig-headed, donkey-like stubbornness.

Why the people chose such a spot for their village when there is elevated ground all round, where they

could get air which means health, is a puzzle. It is now the coldest part of the cold season in the Marofotsy, that is, as they count coldness, and yet, on my arrival, such was the heat that I had to strip off every garment except what decency demanded, and still perspiration rolled off me. What Mahiagogo must be like in the hottest part of the hot season defies description—it must be inferno. The huts are either made of bamboos or wattle and daub. All are very tiny, so that four or five sleeping on the floor (they have neither bedsteads nor mattresses) must fill the whole space and be “pernicious snug.”

I visited Mahiagogo for the first time in 1928, and, being a fairly large village, I started a “cause” there. I have been but twice since—a year ago and this visit. The cause has not thriven for a number of reasons. For one thing the people are not Marofotsy but Tsimihety,\* belonging to a tribe in the far north-east of Madagascar, while the Marofotsy country is almost in the heart of the island. Now the Tsimihety speak a dialect quite unknown in this part of the country, hence the difficulty of understanding what they say, and the problem of instructing them. They are a tiny “foreign” colony in a “distant” land. Moreover, not one of them can read or write, and, even if one presented them with

\*The Gospel of St. Luke in Tsimihety was published by the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1924.

a Bible and hymn-book, they could not read it or understand it. A year ago the evangelist and I spent three solid hours trying to teach them one hymn and the Lord's Prayer, and failed utterly, much as a British Sunday-school teacher would fail were he to try to teach the Primary the twenty-third Psalm in Hebrew. There is the problem, and it has to be tackled and mastered somehow. Meanwhile the "cause" languishes, not because the people are unwilling to gather for worship, but because everything has seemed futile so far.

It must be remembered also that the people are still raw heathen, and we—the evangelist and I—while in deadly earnest, so far have been quite unable to get our messages across because of the language difficulty. The people gather regularly for worship, but it is not Christian worship. In the centre of Mahiagogo there is a sacred enclosure, fenced round with poles. Within this enclosure again there is a block of crystal on which liquid honey is poured to be licked off by the spirits, though I fancy the rats get it. Over this stone is also scattered a small quantity of the first-fruits of the rice harvest, likewise devoured by the rats. Evidently they have recently slaughtered an ox as a sacrifice to the spirits of their ancestors, for the skull and horns of the ox are impaled on a pole. The ancestors had to be content with short commons, I fear, for even the skull is

skinned, while the meat was divided among the inhabitants for a mighty gorge. Around this enclosure the entire population gathers for heathen ancestor worship, to cry frantically and shriek in a frenzy beseeching their ancestors for certain benefits or protection from this or that. One distressing and almost revolting practice is to *mibanjaka*, that is, to sway backwards and forwards and sideways with almost dazing swiftness, which they continue until they topple over in a swoon, foaming at the mouth, in which unconsciousness they babble like idiots. The babbling is listened to excitedly as something oracular. The spirits are supposed to be speaking to the crowd through the incoherent mutterings of the individual writhing on the ground. These "Delphic" oracles must be instantly and implicitly obeyed. There stands the enclosure, sacred to them, evidence of a still engrained idolatry, while my tiny "cause" languishes.

I sat down to wait, for such a village and such a people cannot be passed by lightly. "Night brings the crows home," and night brought the people back to their village. We cleared out a hut to give us more space, and at 5.30 p.m. it was crammed with a motley crowd of smelly ragamuffins. Darkness was falling, so I showed and explained my roll of Scripture pictures at once. The people glared, they were spellbound, they were fascinated. I tried to explain

the pictures one by one in the simplest Malagasy, and they seemed to understand the stories about the Christ. They chattered; they giggled; they guffawed; they rocked with laughter; they discussed the pictures one by one, endeavouring to decipher them, sometimes awed into silence. They were a rabble!

It was desperately hard work speaking to such a crowd. Have any of my readers ever tried to preach the Gospel in such circumstances? I was almost distraught by the hubbub. I was fighting frantically to get the messages of the pictures home. I was making myself hoarse by shouting in a voice louder than the combined volume of theirs. But though I was straining vehemently to make myself heard, they were also straining to understand, so it was all to the good.

Then came a talk with the people about meeting regularly for Christian worship. We then tried to have a time of devotion, but they only knew scraps of three hymns. They struggled to repeat the Lord's Prayer and could not manage it. We asked someone to lead in prayer and were met with blank faces and silence, not a soul knowing how to frame the simplest petition. I tried to teach them to pray by saying: "You cry to your ancestors around the *douany* (sacred enclosure), so why can you not cry to God for blessing and salvation and protection, using

much the same petitions?" It was a new thought to them.

Sorrow and emotion stirred me to the depths as I gazed upon that pathetic crowd. I looked through the door and saw that sacred enclosure standing proudly and defiantly. Had it had a face I should have detected a sneer, and had it had a head I should have seen that head wagging in scorn. I looked again and saw in imagination that sacred enclosure razed to the ground and, instead of shrieks rending the air, I heard these very people singing the praises of One, Jesus. Instead of people lying wriggling, writhing, babbling in unconsciousness on the ground, I saw men and women sitting at the feet of Jesus clothed and in their right minds. That will come. It must come, for the Gospel of Christ cannot be preached in any village without mighty and beneficent changes taking place. I have seen this happen in a thousand villages in Madagascar.

I was sitting in my hut writing to my son and his wife—my last bit of work before "turning in." My lantern was alight and burning brightly. My stretcher was up and waiting for me. I was tired after an exhausting day. I heard a hubbub outside my hut, and, though not startled, I went to investigate.

There stood quite a large company of young people, gabbling like geese. I asked them what I

could do for them. To my extreme astonishment and joy they replied: "We have come to pray!"

I could scarcely believe my ears. They packed the hut. They were still the same irresponsible chatter-boxes to whom life seemed to be unbroken giggle. We tried those three hymns again with as little success as before, so I became singing-master with pupils, but without accomplishing much, the language being the difficulty. I bellowed that I might lead them through the intricacies of the simplest Sankies. I then read a passage from Luke and offered prayer. During prayer they had the grace to bow their heads and close their eyes, and when I said "Amen" they too repeated it with a lovely snap as though they endorsed my prayer and wished its fulfilment. Finally we struggled through the Lord's Prayer and dispersed; they to a hut in the village to spend a couple of hours singing their native songs accompanied by clapping and dancing, though whether heathen or not I could not detect.

Mahiagogo has thus begun the ascent; its young people approaching the missionary for prayer of their own accord, which was much better than my calling them together for that purpose, for in such spontaneity there is life. Has the "praying" at last caught the imagination of the folks at Mahiagogo? Of its young people—certainly. And therein there is hope, and thus, even in the few years that remain

to me of missionary service in Madagascar, I now anticipate seeing a live Church at Mahiagogo, for the young people are quickly picking up the Marofotsy dialect, when fuller instruction can proceed.

Yesterday morning I had thought the "cause" quite dead. Last night I was to discover that there was life in the "corpse." In my twenty-six years in Madagascar I have never known a Church to die or the people of the most benighted village not to awake eventually, for Christ is irresistible and invincible.

# WILLIAM KENDALL GALE

THE MAN AND HIS WORK

by

HAROLD A. RIDGWELL

*"The call was too urgent to be denied—the call of terrible human need; the call of God."* (Kendall Gale in a letter.)

KENDALL GALE has passed to the higher service, and with his passing another chapter in the inspiring story of pioneering in Madagascar has been closed.

Madagascar, which in many ways lies off the beaten track of the world's traffic, and so out of the ken of many, has come to be a familiar and fascinating field for a great host of Christian folk through Gale's circular letters and his contributions to missionary journals. To the wide constituency of the London Missionary Society, to which he belonged, and those of the other evangelical missions working in Madagascar, the country has been for several generations the wonder-field of missions, but Kendall Gale won the interest and inspired the prayers of many beyond the ranks of these societies.

He was a born missionary, and was little more than a youth when, in the first flush and fervour of his Christian life, he felt the constraint of Christ to preach. He says that Sunday by Sunday, after a crowded week of business: "I tramped far preaching Christ, one of the happiest periods of my life." He was Yorkshire born and bred and was a great lover of the dales he knew so intimately.

His death, or rather translation, for we can only think of him in activity, came whilst he was in the full enjoyment of his powers; he was only sixty-one and exceptionally virile for a man of his age. He had come up to Tananarive, the capital, to undergo an operation—not a particularly risky one—and had made a good and rapid recovery. He was actually planning to return to his station, sixty miles north of the capital, when, suddenly, without a word, the call came, came in the land of the people he loved, and for whom he spent himself so unstintingly for nearly thirty-five years.

Readers of this book will need no description of his vivid, picturesque style of writing. He could paint a pen picture with a wealth of telling detail that would grip the imagination and make the reader both see with his eyes and feel with his heart. So, to a great host who never heard him speak, the backward Marofotsy people, "over the ranges" in northern Madagascar, came to be known with

something of intimacy, and prayed for at the throne of Grace.

But Kendall Gale was even more forceful as a speaker than as a writer. He was essentially in his element on a platform. He started with great assets, for he possessed a tall, striking appearance, and a natural gift of oratory. He never failed to grip an audience, and yet he never spared it, for he rarely spoke for less than an hour, or if he did, it was at the bidding of some inexorable chairman. As he spoke of his people over yonder he aroused deep and passionate interest in the hearts of his hearers because he was himself so consumed with desire for them. Those oft-quoted words of F. W. Meyer seem very applicable to Kendall Gale: "Only like souls I see the folks thereunder, bound who should conquer, slaves who should be kings."

And now that voice is earth-silent, and the pen lies on the desk making its mute appeal. In the inscrutable mystery of the Divine ordering there is a great gap in the ranks of that over-burdened, understaffed island. Oh, that the mantle of this fiery evangelist might fall on some new recruit!

Kendall Gale was a Congregational minister, trained at Hackney College, Hampstead, London, and came to the mission field rather late in life after seven years' pastoral work in Yorkshire, but that apparent handicap in age was more than compen-

sated for by his acquired experience in evangelism. He quickly gained a very effective use of the Malagasy language, and became a favourite speaker at their united gatherings. He was more the pioneer than the administrator, and nature had abundantly endowed him for strenuous journeys and forced marches. A few weeks before his operation, he had been trekking on his old push-bike, for, despite his years, he was exceedingly agile and never complained of stiff joints. He was never so happy, nor in such good fettle, as when he was off on some new trek. He hated confinement and chafed at routine, and so what to some men might have been hardship and strain seemed to act on him as a tonic. His head-station was in the evangelized province of Imerina, sixty miles north of the capital, Tananarive. After a few years he and his wife moved out to develop work amongst the needy and degraded Bezanozano. Here he entered on partially tilled ground. Later, seconded by his colleague to the south, he dug deep and wide and so worked the soil that he could say as he did in a recent letter: "We were able to make the eleven churches which we found in the Bezanozano on our arrival, into seventy-nine, and at the present time there is not a single inhabitant of that tribe into whose village the Gospel has not penetrated, or at least, who is not within the sound of the Gospel of Christ."

Gale later entirely relinquished this area, handing on to a colleague its necessary oversight, for the churches were, and are for the most part even now, weak, and are encountering fierce Roman Catholic propaganda. The transference left Kendall Gale free to strike out in another direction, and develop a field which had already yielded some fruit, but which left scope for this passionate evangelist to extend. And so we find him saying in a recent circular letter: "My predecessor had established four churches among the Manendy tribe, still infants in arms. I pioneered them, and succeeded in making them into twenty-five, with no possibility or need for further extension." The thirteen day schools in this area he increased to over fifty. But Gale was for ever pressing forward, lengthening the cords as he strengthened the stakes, and in this way he was led on to pioneer in a new and almost untouched field farther north, the country of the Marofotsy tribe.

The *Isan-enim-bolana* (Native Missionary Society) which united the three evangelical societies of Imerina, had for several years attempted something by sending one or two native evangelists to widely separated posts in this wild and mountainous Marofotsy country, but these had, for the most part, confined their activities to the oversight of churches in the villages in which they lived, where Christian

Hova traders and officials had come, leaving practically untouched the real natives of the country whose villages lay amongst the hills. Here was a field for a pioneer soul like Kendall Gale. A magnificent opportunity matched a dauntless pioneer on fire for the Kingdom!

But, if the opportunity was unique, the embracing of it was no easy task. Despite his already wide area, with its constant demands, despite, too, the heavy financial deficits of the London Missionary Society, Gale decided he must occupy, and so he went forward. Let me quote his own description of the country and the people given in one of his circular letters: "Their land is an oblong stretch of country in the centre of Northern Madagascar. Within its area—about the size of Wales—lie some of the wildest, most mountainous, and probably the barest regions in Madagascar. Its lofty mountains, mostly precipitous; its canyon-like valleys, mainly gorges; its shadowless plains, covered with long, coarse sun-blasted grass, rising to twelve or even fifteen feet; the cold, whistling winds on mountain ridges and plateaux; the suffocation of its airless valleys, each makes it a formidable country for the traveller. There can be few tribes more degraded, less troubled by qualms of conscience, less restrained in any action towards which inclination pulls, than the Marofotsy, obedience to desire apparently being the only law

of conduct. The nature of the country to be covered, the nature of the people to be evangelized, taken together, make the task of the missionary none too easy. If he loves exploration, here are lands untrodden, unsurveyed. If he is interested in primitive peoples, here is a tribe whose animistic religion, whose customs, beliefs and taboos had never been investigated. If the Gospel of Christianity is burning within his soul, here is an opportunity than which no part of the world offers a better.”

The opportunity and the man met, and Kendall Gale had the joy of planting over a hundred causes\* in this country between 1918 and 1935. All trekking in this part of the country had to be done in the dry season between late April and the end of September. Then Kendall Gale would leave his Imerina station and go north† and would be lost in the long grass. Weeks previously he would prepare his itinerary and send word forward to his evangelists to prepare the way, and when the day for leaving arrived there would be great commotion, such comings and goings, at his head-station. His bearers and carriers

\*Many of these were fully constituted churches, but a great number are not more than hut meetings. Throughout the whole of Madagascar no religious services can be held except in properly authorized buildings. To get authorization to meet for worship in a hut, at least ten natives of the village must sign a requisition, for a church proper, not less than eighty.

†When he returned from furlough in 1933 he attempted to live entirely in this north country.

—some twelve or fourteen of his sturdy henchmen—prepared their loads which they would neither change nor abandon until they found themselves back again at the end of the trek. At a signal, the cavalcade would start off, and passing out of the village, would go north, soon lost to sight. Their way passed through sparsely populated country, over mountain ranges, through deep gorges and turbulent mountain streams, sometimes traversing glorious valleys, ravishingly beautiful, but more often along stony barren hillsides and over rocky mountain tops.

After days of trekking they would reach one of the larger villages, really small townships which are Government posts. These are few and very far between in this province, but in each there reside strong communities of Hova Christians from the central Christian province of Imerina. In each of these townships there are fairly large churches, independent and progressive.

These companies of Christians gave Kendall Gale strategic outposts from which to carry on his campaign. At each he had stationed Hova evangelists supported by the Native Missionary Society. A further aid to propaganda in other villages was the presence of Hova Christians, sometimes but a single family, trading or cattle-raising, but these nuclei made it easier to develop than in those places where

there existed no glimmering of the truth, and where unrelieved paganism held sway.

Of the Hova influence it might be of interest here to say a word or two by way of parenthesis. After the French occupation in 1895, inter-tribal fighting came to an end, and the Hova (a born trader) of the dominant and subjugating tribe of the island, was free to travel. From this tribe, too, the Government services are largely recruited. Nominally at least, the Hova people, who form about one-third of the total population of the island, are Christian, and there is no considerable township, and hardly any really big village, at least on the beaten track in Madagascar, where one fails to find a Hova. In this way the Christian Gospel has found in these people a great aid to its propagation, for, wherever even a handful of Hovas is found, that small *coterie* will strive to get a place in which to meet for worship. So it is that the missionaries of each of the seven evangelical societies working throughout the island find that their pioneering has been made more possible and more fruitful because of the interest, often enthusiasm, of lonely Hovas. Though not always of worthy reputation, they have always aided and supplemented the work of the missionary, and have been ready to give generously, sometimes sacrificially, to start a cause. How often, too, has a Hova official or Government doctor been the in-

spiration of some little Bethel! So Kendall Gale, in addition to his native evangelists, often thanked God for Hova officials and planters and traders, many of whom were among his best friends and helpers. The service which the central Christian provinces have in this way rendered should never be lost sight of.

But there were scores of villages lying in the fastnesses of the hills in which no Hova trader or official cared to live, and in which none had ever prospected. To these Kendall Gale came seeking those "other sheep." He disarmed their fears with his gramophone, and had them rollicking with loud laughter and explosive ejaculations, soon, however, to be quiet and spellbound as he showed them pictures of Jesus Christ, and drew out to Him their wondering interest. Repeated visits to such villages at last broke down all reserve, and the day came when interest deepened into desire, and desire stimulated the necessary courage to make a cross against their names on the requisition form, to be sent to the white chief (the administrator) of the province, asking to be allowed to meet in someone's hut to pray. Then a catechist would be put in charge, and the evangelist of that area would add yet another Bethel to his long list of charges. It would be a year, and maybe two, until the missionary, with the wonderful talking box and those

fascinating pictures, would come again to review the progress, and help to deepen the spiritual consciousness of the little community, giving it more direction and leading it on to a fuller knowledge of Christ.

From the first, Kendall Gale taught these people to be self-supporting. He might give grants towards the cost of the new building, when a church or school came to be built, and he might have aided in providing a few necessary requisites for worship. In addition, remittances from folks overseas, interested in the work, would be used to pay evangelists in charge of large areas to help, guide and nurture those infants in the faith, but the salary and the home of the catechist teacher were a charge on the people themselves, as was also the upkeep of their building. In this way no great sums of money were expended, and yet the work progressed in a very remarkable way. It all, of course, speaks volumes for Kendall Gale's passionate devotion to the task, to his continual oversight, and, in many cases, to the way in which his dominating personality and his fiery zeal enthused and inspired his fellow native workers.

Will the work now go on? Can the churches stand? Will financial stress, and the virulent, and often utterly unscrupulous propaganda of the Roman Catholics undermine and weaken these growing

causes and so cause them to fall away? Time alone will show.

Certain it is that the passing of their *Ray aman-dreny* ("father and mother") in God has left them orphaned and bereft. How appealing is the translated letter from a Marofotsy evangelist that has just come through in Mrs. Gale's latest correspondence from Madagascar:

"We think of the work of the Gospel achieved here by our father. More than a hundred churches he has built in our land, and year by year each of these churches beheld his face and heard from his own lips the Word of Life. Wherever there was a human habitation in the Marofotsy land, even to the smallest hut built of grass and leaves, there he stooped to enter that he might lead our tribe to Christ. He climbed steep mountain tracks beneath the scorching sun; he descended into deep and silent valleys, he cut his way through pathless jungle and forest, he waded the swamps, he endured exhausting heat and perilous journeys that he might seek and save us. He made his life of no account. He showed love to the most debased, and kindness to those who opposed the Gospel, that he might bring them to Christ. He bore with our ignorance and folly. The pillar on which we leaned is broken. The signpost which directed our footsteps has been removed. May God send us a man with a spirit like his. May the work of redemption which he began be accomplished in our tribe."

We of the depleted and inadequate staff still work-

ing in the island would join fervently in that prayer believing as we do that God, who gave Gale to Madagascar, will stir up some other disciple of Christ to say: "Here am I, send me."