

Madagascar's Ex-Queen.

FRANK G. CARPENTER HAS AN AUDIENCE WITH RAN. AVALONA III, "THE GRANDDAUGHTER OF GOD," AT HER EXILE HOME IN ALGERIA.

Special Correspondence.

ALGERIA, March 29.—Once the ruler of the third largest island of the world, a country bigger than France, twice as large as Italy and three times as big as New England, the beloved queen of more than 10,000,000 people, with all the money she could spend, with an army of her own, a court the most brilliant of that of any monarch south of the equator, and all that goes with it in the way of luxury, pomp and power. Today, deposed from her throne, a pensioner on the bounty of the French government, she is the hands of her conquerors, watched always by spies and guarded by a muscular French woman, who controls her conversation with the world. Such is the present condition of Ranaivalona III, the former queen of Madagascar, by whom I was granted the honor of an audience today.

THE STORY OF A QUEEN.

Before I describe my interview, or rather my audience, for her majesty was not permitted to talk, I will give you a few words of her history. Her name is Ranaivalona, an imperial consonant which means "The Granddaughter of God." She is a member of the royal family which ruled Madagascar for many years. She is a descendant of Radama I, who became king of all Madagascar in 1810. He was chief of the Hovas, one of the largest and most civilized tribes of the island, who, after conquering many of the other tribes, formed a nation with the Hovas as the ruling race. He was crowned by marrying Rosalina, a Sakalava princess. King Radama was the first to introduce our civilization into Madagascar. He welcomed the missionaries, and as far back as 1820 introduced Protestant Christianity among the Hovas. During his reign schools were established, churches were built, the Bible was printed in the Malagasy language, and the people were largely converted. After his death, in 1828, he was succeeded by his son, Rasoanavalona, who assumed the throne. She opposed the missionaries, but her son, Radama II, again gave the people full liberty as regards religion, and in 1855, Queen Ranaivalona II, the aunt of this queen, carried on the good work. She died in 1883, and was succeeded by the woman I talked with today, who was then just 21 years of age. She is now 45, although she looks 19 years younger. I think she is a widow, for according to custom, when she took the throne she married the prime minister, who was then 70 years old, and he must have died long ago.

RANAIVALONA'S CORONATION.

When Ranaivalona was crowned she made a change in the coronation ceremonies of the country. Other monarchs had always been attended by soldiers. She made school children her chief guard of honor. She had picked out 500 boys and 400 girls from the chief schools of Tananarivo, and all the schools, with their teachers, had excellent places for witnessing the ceremony. The day before the school boys drilled and went through their spear and shield exercises in her presence, and at the time of the coronation she was attended by regiments of boys in uniform and troops of girls dressed in white.

The queen, when I met her today, wore a plain black silk skirt with a white waist of white silk, beautifully embroidered. She had at her throat a star of diamonds set in old silver and about her neck was a gold chain as big around as your little finger. Her clothes were like those of any American lady might wear when receiving the most distinguished of her countrymen, and she was not extravagant or striking in any way.

When Ranaivalona was crowned she wore a white broadcloth robe, heavily with gold, and her train was of crimson velvet with gold embroidery. She wore a large gold crown of a peculiar design, and she fairly sparkled with jewels. She is said to still have many beautiful jewels, and when she left the island of Reunion, where she was first banished, the extraordinary statement was made in the newspapers that the precious stones she took with her were worth more than \$2,000,000.

As the queen was crowned the people fell upon their knees, and then burst into a shout of applause, while the soldiers flourished their spears and the cannon fired. At the same time there were cheers from the boys and girls, and from the 200,000 natives who are said to have been present.

THE QUEEN'S SPEECH.

After that the queen made a speech to her people. She mixed Bible quotations throughout her address, saying:

"The Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and 'Righteousness exalteth a nation.' She promised to protect her country and stand up like a man with her people against any one who might attempt to take even a hair's breadth of it. She urged her subjects to obey the laws, and said that she expected to find them hereafter, closing this statement with the words:

"I wish no one's life to be taken. Whoever forsakes the paths of righteousness walks in the paths of darkness. Is it not so, oh my people?"

HER WARS WITH THE FRENCH.

That was the way that Ranaivalona started. She kept up her good words, but notwithstanding, not long after she was with the French, who had long proclaimed their right to the protection of Madagascar. War ensued, and in a cost of many million dollars the French were finally victorious. They kept the queen for a time on the throne, but found she could not maintain order under the changed conditions, and they took possession of the government. At this time they treated Ranaivalona rather harshly. Instead of calling upon her the general of the French army made the queen call upon him. When she did so it was to request that he be kind to her people and to say that she knew he would treat them well.

Shortly after this Ranaivalona was taken away from the capital and exiled to the island of Reunion. Here she remained until five or six years ago, when she was brought to France, and then to Algeria. Upon her arrival at Marseilles she had expected to go directly to Paris. She was disappointed with the idea of seeing the Parisian capital, and when she was told that she must again cross the Mediterranean, to an exile home in Algeria, she said to have burst into a flood of tears, saying:

"Who is certain of tomorrow? Only yesterday I was a queen; today I am simply an unhappy, broken-hearted woman."

A CAPTIVE IN A GILDED CAGE.

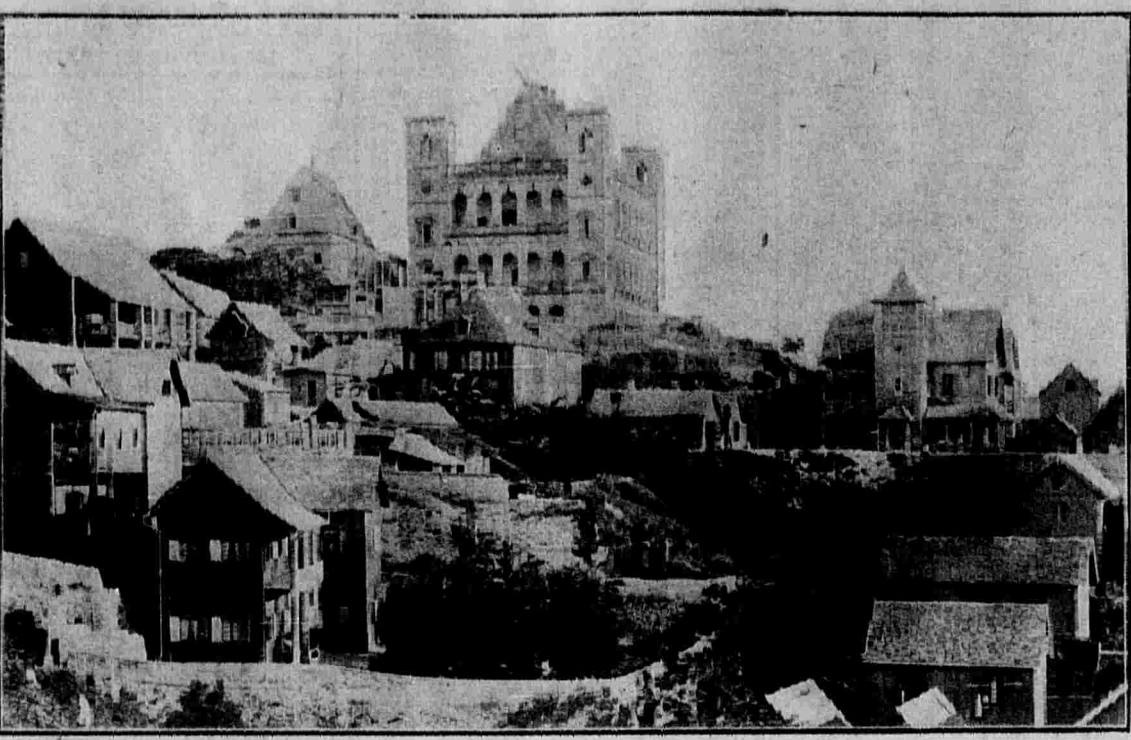
That was in the spring of 1896 and it represents how she felt then. The woman I saw today bore no marks of sorrow and she has, I judge, been reconciled to her situation. She may be a captive, but she has a gilded cage and enough money to satisfy all her wants. The French supply her with one of the finest villas in Algeria; she has horses and carriages and she gives receptions and dinners and holds a little court of her own. I am not sure whether her allowance is \$500 or \$1,000 a month, but she has enough on which to live comfortably. She is now allowed to go to Paris for a month every summer and she is one of the social figures of this fashionable city.

It was through a card of introduction from the American consul that I met Queen Ranaivalona. I took an introduction from the consul, who had picked out 500 boys and 400 girls from the chief schools of Tananarivo, and all the schools, with their teachers, had excellent places for witnessing the ceremony. The day before the school boys drilled and went through their spear and shield exercises in her presence, and at the time of the coronation she was attended by regiments of boys in uniform and troops of girls dressed in white.

HER MAJESTY AT HOME.

When I called I first met Madame Depret. I was admitted to the villa by a maid servant and waited for a while in the reception room at the right of the entrance, where two Paris hats and two parasols of lavender and rose pink which hung on the rack showed that the ladies were home. When Madame Depret entered my interpreter performed the introduction and I presented my request for an interview. The madame replied that I could have an audience with her majesty, although it was contrary to her custom to receive newspaper correspondents. She gave me to understand that the queen would not talk about politics and her own country, and from the way she uttered the words I saw that she meant them. The madame then led the way into

Her Majesty would Talk, But Dare Not—The down Fall of an Empress and How the French Guard Her—Her Gorgeous Coronation and her Palaces—How the Queen Lives Today—A Pen Picture of Her and Photographs by our own Correspondent—Madagascar in 1907 and What the French are doing There—A Remarkable Interview with a Remarkable Woman.



"AH! THAT IS MY PALACE," EX CLAIMED THE QUEEN.

As She Pointed Out Her Royal Residence to Mr. Carpenter in the Madagascar Capital—Photographed Specially For the Deseret News.

A PEN PICTURE OF HER MAJESTY.

We had hardly taken our seats before the queen entered. Her majesty was with her, and she also remained during the audience. I arose as her majesty came in and Madame Depret performed the introduction. Her majesty shook my hand, looking me straight in the eyes as she bade me welcome. She had a very small hand and her eyes are large and beautiful. She is a fine-looking woman and appears much younger than she actually is. She has a high and rather full forehead, a long somewhat thin face and rather full lips, although by no means so thick as those of a negro. Her complexion is of a chocolate brown, and it seems to me that her features are largely Malay. Her hair is jet black. It is straight rather than curly, and she puts it up in a great knot on the top of her head. I have already described her dress, consisting of a simple Paris-made white silk waist and black skirt, and have referred to the plainness of her ornaments. Her manners were as simple as her dress and entirely free from ostentation of any kind. In fact her every act was that of a well-bred society lady, and her soft, low voice, during my stay, that of the drawing room. She motioned me to a chair and sat down on another near by.

I opened the conversation by telling her that I had written a book for the American schoolchildren about the "Islands of the Seas," in which I had described Madagascar, and that I would take pleasure in sending her a copy of the same at some future time. I then showed her some photographs which the governor general of Madagascar had sent me to illustrate this book. She looked over the pictures and at once became interested, her eyes lighting up with pleasure as she recognized her faraway island home and the types of its people.

"Ah, that was my palace," she said, as she held out a photograph of Tananarivo, the capital of Madagascar, and pointed to a building in the center, rising high over the others, upon which the French flag was flying.

"And these are Hovas," she continued as she picked up another, showing a family of well-dressed colored people, "and those Sakalavas," as she looked at a third, a group of blacks with features like negroes. Each picture brought out some remark and before either she or her aunt were aware of it they were talking quite freely. In the meantime the French madame looked rather sour, and when I made a direct question as to how her majesty liked the change from Madagascar to Algeria, she gave a sign and the queen replied that she could not answer that and that she would prefer to say nothing more about her own country, as the French government objected to her discussing such matters.

SHE HAS TO LIKE IT.

A moment later, for some reason, Madame Depret was called out and the queen's aunt said that no conversation could go on until she returned. I interpreted this to mean political conversation, and said a word or two about the weather. I then asked her majesty how she liked the climate of Algeria. To this she replied:

"It does not much matter. I have to like it. Nevertheless, it is a very good climate."

A little later she spoke of Paris, and mentioned the pleasures she had in the life there. I suggested that she extend her travels to the other side of the Atlantic and visit America, and she thought that she would like to do so, but doubted if that would be allowed.

I had brought a copy of my geographical reader on Africa with me, and I made the queen a present of it, suggesting that its simple language might aid her in her study of English. She took the book and looked over the pictures, comparing the natives there represented with her own people, on that great island not far away from the African coast. She told me she found the English language much more difficult to learn than the French. Her

majesty is a good French scholar and speaks, writes and reads that language well. Our conversation was carried on in French and the queen never hesitated for a word or a phrase to express her meaning.

PHOTOGRAPHING A QUEEN.

At the close of the audience I told her majesty that I would consider it a great favor if she would allow me to make a photograph of her, as I would like to have a picture made by myself to show to the American people. At first she said that she did not think it would be permitted, but that she would ask Madame Depret, and that if she had no objections she would go outside and pose for the camera.

At this moment her French guardian came in and the question was submitted to her. The madame replied that it was all in the hands of her majesty and she would be permitted to do as she pleased.

Upon being assured that the pictures were not for use in Algeria the queen and her aunt then went with me into the garden back of the house and she stood in the sun while I made the pictures. I had one photograph snapped by my dragoman of myself standing beside the queen. I am five feet seven inches in height and the queen is almost a head shorter. The photographs are excellent and they represent her majesty as she looks in this good year of our Lord, 1907. After taking the photographs I left, her majesty again shaking my hand as she said good-bye.

WITH THE FRENCH IN MADAGASCAR.

Speaking of Madagascar, I have made some inquiries of the officials here as to what the French have done in that country since her majesty was deposed. They tell me that many reforms have been instituted and are now under way. Slavery has been abolished in all parts of the island, the schools have been improved and education is now compulsory upon all children between eight and 14 years of age. There are now a large number of schools, both for boys

and girls. There are also schools of agriculture, and of industry, and of technical training. The children are required to learn the French language, and attempts are being made to Frenchify the island.

NEW ROAD AND RAILROADS.

So far there are but few roads in Madagascar and there are but few places where wheeled vehicles can be used. The most common way of travel on the part of those who can afford it is in chairs on the shoulders of men. The French have made some military roads and they have a wagon road from the chief port, Tananarivo, to Tananarivo, the capital. They have laid out a railway to connect these two cities, but so far have only built a few miles. There is also a railway 62 miles long which is connected by canal with Tananarivo and I understand that this will be continued to Tananarivo. A wagon road has also been built from the capital to the west coast and mails are carried over that road on automobiles. The French have established postoffices almost everywhere, and they have put up telegraph lines to the extent of about 2,500 miles. They have also about 130 miles of telephone lines.

A MILITARY GOVERNMENT.

Madagascar is now a French colony, but it is entirely different from this colony of Algeria. Algeria is represented in France by a parliament and it elects its own officials with the ex-

ception of the governor general and a senate in parliament and it has no civil and partly under military control. It has no governor general in the military territory the soldiers direct everything. There are about 12,000 troops and about 300 officers, but a large number of these are natives who have been chosen by popular vote. Taxes are said to be a little higher than they were under the former regime. The chief business of the island consists of stock raising and farming. Madagascar is covered with pastures and it has something like 2,000,000 cattle. It also raises horses and sheep and the people are now making it certain farming. The land opening up gold mines, and there are also deposits of iron, nickel, zinc, copper and coal.

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References: Deseret National Bank, State Bank of Utah, Salt Lake City; Provo Commercial and Savings Bank and State Bank of Utah, Provo, Utah.

The Bassett School For Stammerers, Provo, Utah.

Wm. E. Bassett, Director.

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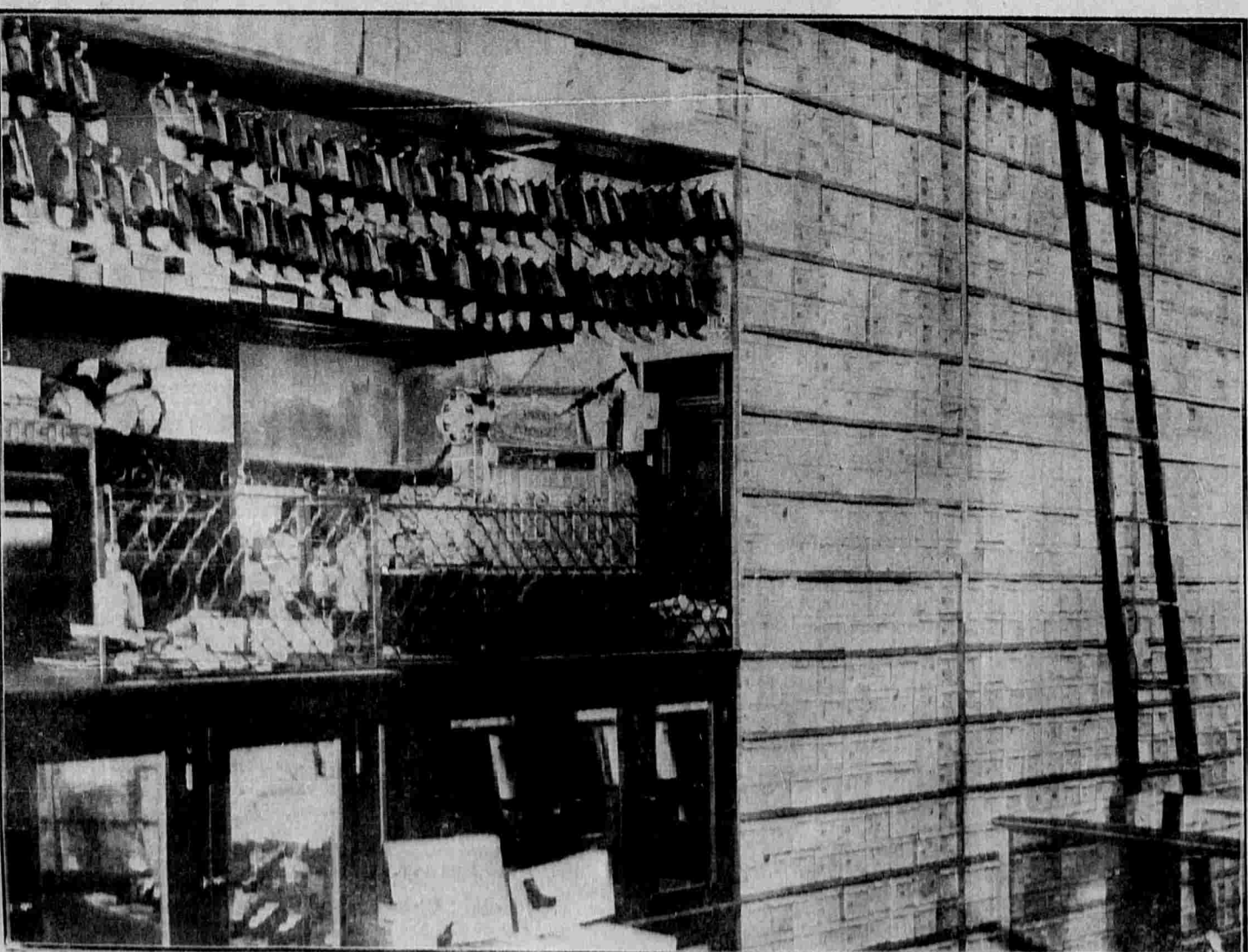
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