

MADAGASCAR STILL HEATHEN.

We forget how large an island Madagascar is—that it is more than a thousand miles in length and 360 miles in width—that it is four times the size of England and Wales; and we expect that a large island like that shall be Christianized by a few men in a few years. It takes a long time to Christianize an Island like Madagascar, and it will need the greatest patience, and the united exertions of our churches in England to consummate the work which has been begun there. We forget, too, that the larger part of Madagascar is still heathen; that all the coast region of Madagascar, the extensive maritime plains, peopled by large tribes of Malagasy, are still heathen ground. Our work has been done on the tableland of the interior, in the two central provinces of Imerina and Betsileo. We have there had wonderful results, the reports of which have been given. But, outside that district, with a few exceptions, Madagascar is still heathen to-day, and in the General Review of the Madagascar Mission published in 1880 I find that, taking the number of adherents as 300,000, which is rather a large estimate, we have to-day three-quarters of the population of the central provinces without Christian instruction; and estimating the whole population of Madagascar at four millions, we have more than three millions without any Christian instruction whatever. So much for the work that has been carried on in Madagascar; so much in answer to those who say, "Cannot we take the Missionaries from Madagascar and send them to India and China?"

The first Malagasy who ever learnt the alphabet died only last January, an old man full of years. He was ten years old when the first Missionary settled in the capital in 1820, and he died at the age of seventy-two. What has been done within the lifetime of that one man? To-day in Madagascar we have 862 elementary schools at work, with 43,904 scholars, in connexion with our Society and the Friends' Foreign Mission Association, which works in harmony with us. We have 20,000 adults able to read, and 25,000 children who can read the New Testament—in all, more than 60,000 people able to read within the lifetime of that one man. Then we have 1,200 churches and 71,525 church members.

I have not concealed from you the condition of many of those church members; I wish you to understand how ignorant

and how degraded some of these are; but there is the fact that they number nearly 72,000. The contributions by natives during the last ten years for the spread of Christianity and education have amounted to 40,000*l.*, or two hundred thousand dollars, and that among a people who cut a dollar into 720 parts; so that the 720th part of a dollar will buy something in a Malagasy market. When people are prepared to put their hands into their pockets and give of their substance for the spread of Christianity, it shows that they are in earnest. The number of Bibles sold within the last six years at a shilling each in Madagascar is 20,000 and the number of copies that we know to be in the hands of the people is 38,000.—*Rev. J. Peill.*

SEVEN SHORT RULES FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

1. Never neglect daily private prayer; and when you pray remember that God is present, and that he hears your prayer. (Heb. xi, 6.)
2. Never neglect daily private Bible-reading; and when you read remember that God is speaking to you, and that you are to believe and act upon what he says. I believe all backsliding begins with the neglect of these two rules. (John iv. 39.)
3. Never profess to ask God for anything you do not want. Tell him the truth about yourself, however bad it makes you; and then ask him, for Christ's sake, to forgive you what you are, and to make you what you ought to be. (John iv. 24.)
4. Never let a day pass without trying to do something for Jesus. Every night reflect on what Jesus has done for you, and then ask yourself, What have I done to-day for Him? (Matt. v. 13-15.)
5. If ever you are in doubts as to a thing being right or wrong, go to your room, and kneel down and ask God's blessing upon it. (Col. ii. 17.) If you cannot do this it is wrong. (Rom. xiv. 23.)
6. Never take your Christianity from Christians, or argue that, because such and such people do so and so, therefore you may. (2 Cor. x. 12.) You are to ask yourself, "How would Christ act in my place?" and strive to follow him. (John x. 27.)
7. Never believe what you feel if it contradicts God's Word. Ask yourself, Can what I feel be true if God's Word is true? and if both cannot be true, believe God, and make your own heart the liar. (Rom. iii. 4; 1 John v. 10, 11.)—*Brownlow North.*