

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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MADAGASCAR.

THE triumphs of Christianity in Madagascar are among the most notable in the history of Christian missions. In 1818 the first mission was established. In ten years about 15 000 converts were made. Then came a fearful outburst of persecution and thousands—literally thousands—of Christians were put to death. But in 1869 the Queen of Madagascar embraced Christianity. A memorial church of the martyrs was erected; Bibles and tracts were published by the thousand, and it is estimated that there are now over 300 000 Christians in the island. The people are intelligent, docile, and have attained a high degree of civilization. They are brave and patriotic, and have valiantly withstood the assaults made upon them by the French during the last year or two.

BEES AND THEIR WAYS.

To begin at the beginning—the Queen Bee lays a'out sixteen thousand eggs, of which eight hundred are males, or drones—think of that, you hardworking boys!—the whole remainder being—with the exception of four or five queens, who fight by-and-by for their mother's throne—workers (or females, I suppose). Well, we will leave that, and consider the marvellous wisdom, skill, and foresight of these little beings.

The form of their cells, six-sided, is the very best they could adopt, as it gives the greatest space and strength at a cost of the least amount of material; but what method they pursue to make them that shape no one can tell.

These cells are, as you all know, made of wax, and this the bee produces chiefly from its own body: it keeps it



MADAGASCAN FAMILY.

concealed under six little flaps at its stomach, and is moulded with other matter into the firm wax.

The yellow substance you see on the bees' legs is the pollen of flowers, which is kneaded up into a mass by the little fellows, and is by us called "bee bread."

If the Queen Bee should die suddenly, leaving no heirs-apparent to ascend the throne, a working bee is put into a royal cell, fed in a royal manner, and taking in royal principles with its food, it becomes a queen straightway, and is elevated to the vacant throne. Every queen rules absolutely in her

own hive. She has no ministers and courtiers, no parliament or hang-ers on. If a strange queenage, as it is called, there is a battle royal at once, which is continued until one royal lady is destroyed.

As the swarm of time approaches, the old queen is worn and troubled by the noisy claims of the various youthful queens, each yearning for the throne, until at last, driven wild by their clamor, she rushes out of the hive, attended by a numerous band of her followers. Thus the first swarm is formed. Seven or eight days after, queen No. 2 departs, taking with her a numerous following. When all the swarms have left the old hive, the remaining queens fight it out for the throne.

Which sounds very much like a footless stocking without a leg, or a saucepan that has no bottom or sides. The thrones of an empty beehive!

Ah! but the bees will gather more honey by-and-by, and the queen will not rule in an empty kingdom.

INDIAN MEDICINE MEN.

The Indian tribes of North America generally contain a few "medicine" men who are the laziest and at the same time the sharpest men in the tribe. They profess to be wizards, and to do all sorts of impossible things, but though called the "medicine" men they have, as a rule, nothing to do with healing, the

old women of the tribe being usually some. They are, however, expected to cure those diseases which the old woman doctor has given up, and are supposed to be able to cause rain to fall, to make fishes, or beavers, or buffaloes plentiful, and to perform other wonders. Indians being very