

Young People's Department.



TRAVELLING IN MADAGASCAR.

MADAGASCAR.

MADAGASCAR is a large island on the eastern side of Africa. It is over nine hundred miles long and, in its widest part, about three hundred miles broad. There is a large part of the island that as yet we do not know anything about, but some parts of it are said to be a very nice place to live. The inhabitants are a curious lot of people, who have taught themselves a good many things which other savages do not know. But they have a great deal to learn yet, and Christian missionaries are trying to teach them. If you want to travel in Madagascar, instead of hiring a carriage or going on a railway train, you get up on a litter which is carried by four men, two in front and two behind. Then, with an umbrella over your head to keep off the hot rays of the sun, away you go. Sometimes four other men come along to take their turn at carrying the litter. But they must get very tired and out of breath if the journey is a long one. The Church of England has built several churches and schools in Madagascar, and good men and women are trying to teach the people to become Christians.

There are many curious plants and trees in Madagascar. There is one tree, we are told, that yields water for thirsty men to drink. It is not sugar water, like the sap that comes out

of Canadian maple trees, but good water that people can drink.

A man who was once travelling there had emptied his water-flask and was suffering from thirst. "Where can we get water?" he asked of one of the natives.

"Right here, sir, any time you like," said the man.

Then he led him to a group of tall trees standing quite near, with straight trunks and bright green, broad leaves growing out of both sides of the stalk, making the tree appear like a great fan.

"You think this is a fine tree," said the native, "and so it is; now I will show you what it is good for."

He pierced one of the leaf stems at the point where it joined the tree, and a stream of clear water spurted out, which the traveller caught in his water-can, and found to be a cool, fresh, excellent drink.

The native went on to say, "This tree, which is good for us in more ways than one, we call the 'traveller's tree.' The leaves drink in the rain that falls on them and store it up for the thirsty traveller's use."

Did that native know the good God who had provided for the wants of His creatures in such a curious way? We read, "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works."