

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

CARAVAN CROSSING A STREAM.

THE natives of Africa are accustomed to all sorts of what we would call hard and disagreeable work. Deprived of the advantage of railroads, and passing over country where it would be impossible to use waggons, all the baggage must be carried. Explorers, traders, and missionaries all engage the natives to do this work, and the accompanying picture shows a caravan crossing a stream with their loads on their heads. On either side of the stream are huts made of wood and grass, where they may stop for rest and refreshment. Some places in the stream are very deep and it is necessary to use the utmost caution lest they lose their footing. Two of them have already done so, and now with the help of their dog are endeavouring to regain their load.

ABOUT WASPS.

WASPS, though cruel and ferocious to many other insects, and ready enough to sting anyone who molests them (never doing so unless provoked), among themselves, in their own home, are as quiet and civilly behaved as the quietest nest of bees; and a wasp's nest is as curious and full of interest as the daintiest beehive. Unlike bees, however, wasps store up no honey and make no wax; their own life is but a short one (very few ever surviving the first winter), and short as it is, seems to be given up to the one thought of providing for their future young ones. The place is chosen after long and careful search, for the wasp's nest is generally some little cavity underground, a hole in a bank, or an old nest of the field mouse, a hollow in the thatch, or a rotten tree. Whichever it be, the working wasps soon clear it out to the proper size (an oval shape of about fifteen inches by twelve), build a covered zigzag way to lead to it, and then make two holes at the lower extremity, one for entrance and one for exit, so that there shall be no crowd or awkward meetings in the narrow passages. This done, the workers begin their task of building the comb of a solid substance like papier-mache, carefully roofed over with a dome of grey, brown, or striped paper (each of the six varieties of wasps making their own special kind), which, if held up to the light, shows the water-mark of nature's impressing, and the builder is easily recognized.

How do the wasps get the light, fairy paper for the roof and sides of their nests, and the solid, enduring paper for the cells? Thousands of years before the Egyptians had found out how to pare down the stems of papyrus into sheets for their books, or the Chinese to squeeze and spread out cotton pulp into a sheet of coarse paper, the tiny wasp knew full well how to fashion it by a way known only to herself, out of

fibres of grass, withered leaves, rotten wood, bark scrapings, the thin coating of buds, vegetable down, and almost every other material since tried by paper makers in all parts of the world. And this she could do on the very first day that she left the cell and flew out into the sunshine.

Watch her settle on that old gatepost in the corner of the field, and you will see her peeling off tiny strips of fine woody fibre, rolling them up into pellets, and carrying them in her strong mandibles to the nest. Once there, after a moment's rest, she sets to work as if she had been a mason for long years, instead of maybe for an hour. If the outer wall wants strengthening or enlarging, she gets astride the edge of the nest, presses down the pellet with her fore-

tree-wasp, which hangs exposed in a bush or hedgerow, is open to all winds and weathers." Turn where we will in the history of these tiny creatures and the little world which they build and inhabit for the few brief weeks or months of their existence, everywhere are to be found traces of inborn sagacity, skill and patience, which no human apprentice could possibly imitate without many long years of toilsome labour and application—even if he ever got beyond the rudiments of his art—and no human skill can possibly rival.

OPTIONAL CIVILITIES.

OPTIONAL civilities, such as saying to one's inferior, "Do not stand without your

WINDMILLS NEAR ANTWERP.

BY EMILY LUCAS BLACKALL.

WINDMILLS were invented in the time of Augustus, the first Roman emperor. As he was born more than sixty years before Christ, windmills are entitled to the dignity of considerable antiquity. Antwerp, the capital of the Belgian province of Antwerp, was founded in the seventh century, a fact which, along with the thought of the conception of the windmill, causes a long look backward.

The population of Antwerp is mostly Flemish, which language is the prevailing one, though the French is in use among the upper classes of the people.

Antwerp is situated on the river Schelde, and the numerous canals that penetrate to the interior of the city make it a constant reminder of the city of Venice. A view of Antwerp from one of the small pleasure boats that thread their way circumspectly between the many islands of the Schelde, is a pleasure not to be forgotten. Great numbers of windmills lend picturesqueness to the view, and imagination brings to the foreground the fruitless efforts of the fanciful Don Quixote, whose exploits were finally brought to a peaceful and happy end by the graphic pen of Cervantes, a famous Spanish writer.

These windmills are of great service in industries where wheel power is required, and are invaluable for drawing water and grinding grain. Very simple in construction, they yet command almost a reverential respect for the ingenuity of the human mind, in making a wind a servant for good. It recalls anew the word of God at the creation of the world, when he gave the dominion over every thing that moves upon the earth. And so the thought is led to the wisdom, power, and love of God, who fashioned the world in so much beauty and grandeur, furnished it with all things needful and made man with possibilities of turning into blessings all created things; the great essential being to have heart, brain, and effort controlled by the Spirit of God.

One of the pleasant features of the prairie lands of our Western country is the frugal, comfortable appearance of the houses of the farmers of the prairie land; and in some of the States, the first object that greets the expectant eye of the traveller by carriage, as he nears a home, is the radii or arms of a windmill. It seems to give a feeling of universal kinship to remember that in common with the ancient Romans, and the less ancient Antwerpians, the people of our own time feel the need of using the wind as the motor of wheel-work.

MODESTY is a maiden's necklace. Wear it.



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legs, kneading it in as she goes, and fastening it with a gum of her own making, neatly and smoothly, so that when dry the new work shall fit well to the old, though here and there may come a patch of different colours—according to the different material which each worker may choose for her paper.

The quantity of paper used for the walls and the comb is sometimes very great, no old cuttings being used until they have been again bitten up into fresh pulp and laid on like wet mortar; and the floor of a nest may often be found covered with scraps of old paper as that of a beehive is with tiny scales of wax. One kind of wasp makes a strong, thick, white paper, like cardboard, stout enough to be proof against the frequent storms of wind and rain; the frequent storms of wind and rain, of scale, makes its paper thick and brittle, of a yellow colour, out of fragments of decayed wood, bits of straw, and other such refuse, mixed up with sand and glue into a coarse pulp, with a good clear space between the combs and the wall; while the nest of the

hat," to one's equal, "Do not rise, I beg of you," "Do not come out in the rain to put me in my carriage," naturally occur to the kind hearted; but they may be cultivated. It used to be enumerated amongst the uses of foreign travel that a man went away a bear and came home a gentleman. It is not natural to the Anglo-Saxon race to be over-polite. They have no "little cares."

A husband in France moves out an easy-chair for his wife and sets a footstool for her. He hands her the morning paper, he brings a shawl if there is danger of a draught, he kisses her hand when he comes in, and tries to make himself agreeable to her in the matter of these little optional civilities. It has the most charming effect upon all domestic life; and we find a curious allusion to the politeness observed by French sons towards their mothers and fathers in one of Moliere's comedies, where a prodigal son observes to his father, who comes to denounce him, "Pray, sir, take a chair. You could scold me so much more at your ease if you were seated."