

their city had power to set this ineffaceable seal on his stern heart. After he has pictured the terrors of hell and the trials of purgatory, he brings Beatrice before us a transcendent spirit of loveliness and light; and in their upward journey through paradise, those awful scenes of the lower realms are forgotten. Even so the girl Beatrice must have shown before Dante, in the midst of the wrong and woe that clouded their fair city.—
Our Youth.

Maize and Tobacco.

THE Indian corn looked over the fence,
And what do you think he spied?
A field of tobacco just ready to bloom
And stretching in lordly pride.

To his broad-leaved neighbour at once he called,
In accents loud and clear,
I thought you belonged to a sunnier clime—
Pray, what are you doing here?

So then, with a haughty air replied
The plant of power and pelf,
You are pleased to ask of my business, sir,
What do you do yourself?

I feed the muscle and blood and bone,
To make our farmers strong,
And furnish blood for the little ones
That round their tables throng.

I move in a somewhat loftier sphere,
The foreign guest rejoined,
As a chosen friend and companion dear
Of men of wealth and mind.

I'm the chief delight of the gay young spark
O'er the wise, my away-I hold,
I lurk in the book-worm student's cell—
In the dowager's box of gold.

Thousands of hands at my bidding work;
Millions of coin I raise—
He ceased to speak, and in angry mood
Responded the tasseled maize:—

You're in secret league with dyspeptic ills—
A merciless traitor band,
With clouds of smoke you pollute the air,
With floods of slime the land.

You tax the needy labourer sore,
You quicken the drunkard's thirst,
You exhaust the soil—and I wish you'd go,
To the place whence you came at first.

The Portuguese Trouble.

WITHIN the past few years a very eager rivalry has grown up between the European nations to acquire or increase possessions in Africa, and this rivalry has more than once endangered peace between them.

If a map were made of Africa as it is to-day, it would reveal that portions of that continent are occupied by at least seven European nations, and that these occupations have increased rapidly within a short period.

The most recent collision between two European states over African territory, is the very serious one which has arisen in South Central Africa, between England and Portugal.

Both these countries have long held certain portions of territory in that part of the "Dark Continent." As long ago as the fifteenth century, Portugal discovered the island of Madeira, and the coasts of Senegal and Guinea on the West African coast. About 1500, the same power planted settlements on the coast of Mozambique, on the south-east side of the continent.

As a consequence of these discoveries, Portugal to-day holds possession both of Mozambique on the east, and of Angola and Benguela on the west.

Between these two colonies, in the central part of the continent, there lies a vast extent of ter-

ritory, drained by the Zambesi and Shire rivers, reaching to Lake Nyassa on the east, and inhabited by savage and warlike races—notably the Makalolos. It is the territory lying north and south of the great Zambesi River, which is now the main subject of contention, a part of which is called Mashonaland.

Portugal lays claim to the discovery of this territory—to its occupation for centuries—and points to the facts that it has been explored by Portuguese travellers, has been the field of Portuguese missionaries, and was ceded to Portugal by the native rulers more than two hundred and fifty years ago.

The English, on the other hand, declares that the country was first fully explored by Livingstone and other Englishmen; that Portugal has never made permanent settlements in the territory, or taken real and effectual possession of it; that English missions have long been established therein, and that English enterprise has been actively engaged in settling and developing the country.

Several months ago a British consul, Mr. Johnston, proceeded to the Zambesi River for the purpose of establishing English influence in the country between that river and Lake Nyassa. While there he made treaties of alliance with the chiefs of the Makalolo tribes on the banks of the river.

Accordingly these tribes hoisted the British flag, and thus seemed to acknowledge that they had consented to come under English rule.

But soon after, a Portuguese officer, Major Serpa Pinto, appeared upon the scene, at the head of nine hundred soldiers, armed with rifles and Gatling guns. This expedition met that of Consul Johnston, but no collision occurred between them.

The Portuguese, finding the Englishman ahead of him, returned to the coast for reinforcements, and then returned to the Zambesi. He formed a camp on the frontier of the Makalolos, attacked the tribes with his rifles and cannon; and, among other spoils, captured two English flags. The tribes thereupon submitted to him.

This act on the part of Serpa Pinto at once aroused the indignation of the English Government, which promptly demanded reparation for it. At the time this article is written, this demand has not been complied with, and the relations between the two countries are much strained, there being danger that war may break out between them as the result of the quarrel.

It is probable that in the end, by peaceful means or otherwise, the disputed territory will fall into the hands of England, as the stronger power. Portugal can hardly hope to hold her own against the English navy.

If this turns out to be the case, we may expect to see the South African possessions of the English extended from the Transvaal up to Lake Nyassa, and probably even north of that to the great Lake Tanganyika, which was discovered in 1858, by Speke and Burton.—*Youth's Companion.*

Tribute to the Bible.

THE famous French monk, orator, and scholar, Lacordaire, writes to a friend: "I have read the Bible for thirty years, and every day do I discover in it new lights and new depths. How different from the word of man! That is exhausted at a single draught, but the word of God is a bottomless abyss. When I read the Gospels, every word seems to be like a flash of lightning, and gives me new consolation. Paul's Epistles, too, enchant me with their truth. They are an ocean, of which God alone is the shore."—*Memoirs.*

The Restless Boy in Church.

How he turns and twists
And how he persists
In rattling his heels;
How uneasy he feels,
Our wide awake boy in church!

Then earnest and still
He attends with a will,
While the story is told
Of some hero bold,
Our dear, thoughtful boy in church.

But our glad surprise
As his thoughtful eyes
Are turned in despair
At he twitches the hair
Of his little sister in church.

Still each naughty trick flies,
At a look from the eyes
Of his mother so dear,
And thinks best to sit near
Her mischievous boy in church.

Another trick comes
Yes, his finger he drums,
Or his kerchief is spread
All over his head—
And still we take him to church.

He's troublesome? Yes
I'm bound to confess,
But God made the boys,
With their fun and their noise,
And he surely wants them in church.

Such children you know,
Long, long years ago,
Did not trouble the Lord,
Though his disciples were bored,
So we'll keep them near him in Church.

A Tree Talk.

WHAT a wonderful thing a tree is! A live thing—a useful thing—a beautiful thing—and so common that we scarcely think of it as a wonder at all.

Think of the great families of trees—the maple, the beech, the birch, the hemlock, the spruce, the oak—and so on and on. So many alike, and yet each one different! What a world of wonders!

In the human family there are oddities, you know, and so in the tree family.

There is the whistling tree, for instance. It grows in the West India Islands. It bears pods with open edges, and the wind passing through them makes the whistling sound which gives the tree its name.

Then there is the cow tree, which yields a delicious creamy milk. This tree grows in South America, and often looks like a dead tree, but if it is tapped the milk will flow out freely. Sunrise is "milking-time," when the natives come with their jugs, and fill them with the sweet, nourishing fluid.

Now, if only the bread-fruit tree grew near the cow tree, what a land that would be for little lovers of bread and milk! But this tree is found in the South Sea Islands. The fruit, looking like round balls, about as big as a baby's head, is baked just as we bake bread, and comes out looking and tasting like sweet, new bread.

There is a sneeze-wood tree, a native of South Africa, which cannot be cut or sawn without causing violent sneezing.

Then, in India, there is the sorrowful tree, which blossoms only in the night; in Central America, the hand tree, which has flowers shaped like a hand, with the fingers spread out; the grease tree, in China, from which beautiful candles are made; and in our own country the toothache tree, so named because the bark is a cure for toothache.

These are by no means the only strange individuals in the great family of trees. What a pleasant study it would be to search them all out!