

# PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

TORONTO, DECEMBER 7, 1889.

[No. 25.]

ENLARGED SERIES.—VOL. IX.]

## THE AXENSTRASSE, SWITZERLAND.

AT Flüellen, the grandeur of the Lake of the Four Forest Cantons—*Vierwaldstätter-See*—or, as it is also called, the Lake of Uri, bursts upon the view. The mountains rise abruptly from the lake, from eight to ten thousand feet. I walked some miles along the Axenstrasse—a road hewn in the mountain side, high above the lake, and beneath tremendous overhanging cliffs of tortured strata, which in places are pierced by tunnels—and lingered for hours enchanted with the blended beauty and sublimity of the views. With quickened pulse of expectation, I descended the cliff to the site of the far-famed Tell's Chapel, so familiar in pictures. But what was my disappointment to find not one stone left on another! That great destroyer of the romantic, a railway, was being constructed along the lake margin, and the time-honoured chapel, said to be five hundred years old, had been removed. A workman showed me the plans of a brand new one which was to be erected near the spot; which I felt to be almost a sacrilege.

Embarking at Flüellen, I sailed down the memory-haunted lake, passing the field of Rütli, where, five hundred years ago, the midnight oath was taken by the men of Uri, which was the first bond of the Swiss Confederacy; and further on the monument of Schiller, the bard of Tell. The lake lies like a huge St. Andrew's cross among the mountains, which rise abruptly from its deep, dark waves—That sacred lake, withdrawn among the hills,  
Its depths of waters flanked as with a wall,  
Built by the giant race before the flood,  
Each cliff and headland and green promontory  
Graven with the records of the past:  
Where not a cross or chapel but inspires  
Holy delight, lifting our thoughts to God  
From godlike men.

The whole region is a sanctuary of liberty. Memories of Sempach and Morgarten and Rütli; of Winkelried and Fürst and Tell; of purest patriotism and heroic valour, forever hallow this lovely land. The steamer sails along beneath this tremendous cliff where the roadway may be seen far up its beetling side. The Canadian tourist party were profoundly impressed with the sublimity of the scene. This cut is one of over one hundred by which the account of their adventures will be illustrated in the *Methodist Magazine* for 1890.

## WINTER IN THE COUNTRY AND IN THE CITY.

BY H. W. BEECHER.

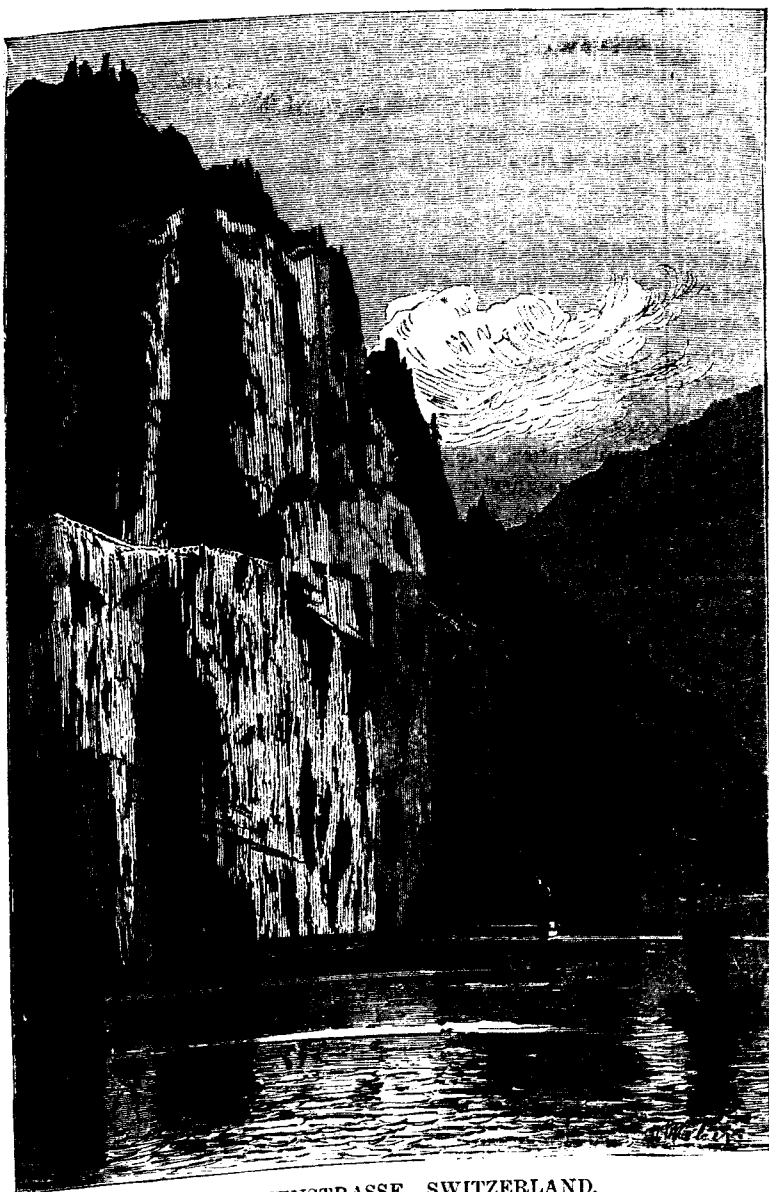
OVER the wide Northern Continent it is a winding sheet; a shroud which covers dead summer and hides the decaying leaves, grass and flowers. Over their burial the winds sigh a requiem, while

which artists put on the feet of Mercury), winter is anything but gloomy. The sports develop an exhilaration hardly to be equalled in spring or summer.

But winter in the city! For a night the snow is fair and incorrupt. Then, sullied by hoof and wheel, its beauty changed to grime and grey, it is utterly given over to ugliness. In the country the snow helps labour, makes new roads, frost bridges the rivers, hardens the swamps, opens the forests to lumbermen. In the city snow is not a blessing, but a curse. It obstructs the pavements, blocks the streets, oppresses feeble roofs, or descends from them on the heads of unwary travellers, and is altogether a hindrance and a nuisance. In the country snow helps church-going; in the city it keeps people at home. The young man with his pleasing companion by his side in the country blesses the two miles to church, and

WISHES THEY WERE TEN;

nor is there any music in the choir or organ like the whispered gospel of love in the sleigh. A Sabbath morning in the country after a snow-storm is the perfection of visual poetry. The horizon line is keen cut, like the edge of a wide sickle, the radiant hills seem new created, no longer of earth, but of heavenly matter, descending from the incorrupt heavens. The trees are etched upon a blue background, and the sky is arched over like a priceless bowl of sapphire. The very storm of the night seems to set for the quiet and beauty of the Sabbath morning. It comes out of darkness as, in Beethoven's symphony, after a dark and tangled passage of tormented chords, come forth at length the melodious strains of joy. The very animals rejoice. The cock sends wide through the air his brief halleluia. The lowing kine respond. The staccato dogs join in, and after this burst of sound far up in the heavens and over the



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the grey air is filled with storm-whirled clouds of snow. This is winter in desolation. But where town and cities and villages have covered the land, and frost, that exquisite blind artist of the night, has etched the farmers' windows with rarest scenery, and roads are broken out, and sleigh bells are filling the air with clinking music, and boys are snow-balling or building and defending snow forts, or merrily coasting down hill, or swarming on the ice with skates (which must be the wings

forest, the priestly crow is heard pronouncing an amen.

But, thank God! all men, nor a large proportion, do not live in cities. Throughout the vast rural space are families apart, who, to the uninitiated, may seem to be thrown out of the world by snow-muffled winter. On the contrary, no part of the year is more fruitful of enjoyment to intelligent people than the seclusive months of winter. Amusements in which the children are taught to

The greatest homage we can pay to truth is to use it.