PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

VOL. XX. TORONTO, JANUARY 13, 1900. No. 2.

Under the Snow.

The year with its wonderful mystery of
flowers,
Its velvet meadows and bloom-hedged
bowers,
Its streams of silver and golden glow.
Of marvellous beauty lies under the snow
Under the glow
And under the gloom,
Of the surrounding snow
And the winter moon.

But whoever dreams it will always be,
That the snow will cover eternally,
Who thinks it, while lily and violet sweet,
With promise of spring stir under the
feet.
Under the snow
With a meek unrest,
And a protest low,
Moves the year to its
best.

If under the snow for a brief
day lies
All that is good, the great
Father is wise,
His summer hastens, a great
bird sings
At heaven's lattice with rest-
less wings.
Flowers are growing,
God's flowers of truth,
His day is dawning
Upon the earth.

ZAMBESIA.

That was a bright moment in the life of the noble Livingstone when first of any European he looked upon the mighty waterfalls of the African Zambesi. He had heard of them at the court of the Makolo chief, Sekeletu—the natives talked with awe of "Mosi-oa-tunya," ("smoke sounds there"), and Livingstone describes how, while approaching the river, he heard miles off the thunder of the waters, and saw the five great columns of snowy vapour rising some hundreds of feet into the sky, then condensing into dark rain clouds, and falling back in constant showers. He says "Creeping to the verge with awe, I peered down into a large fissure of rock where the river, a mile in width, leapt into a chasm, 300 feet deep." The walls of this gigantic cleft are perpendicular, and wind on for thirty or forty miles. At the bottom the vast white torrent boils along its basalt bed. Bright rainbows gleam amongst the diamond spray. Livingstone named them the Victoria Falls. (We give a view of the falls and also of the rapids below them, in our illustration.)

The Zambesi crosses Africa for about 1,000 miles in the shape of the letter S. It drains a country of more than half a million square miles. The lands on its banks are fertile beyond description. Park-like rather than forest, with splendid timber, they are rich flowering shrubs, yielding dyes, drugs, oilseeds, and wild sugar-cane. There is the Baobab tree, with a trunk sixty-five feet around, bearing fruit like a cocoanut. Inside the nut is found a dry, white powder, which makes an excellent cooling drink for fevers. There are also wild plums, wild grapes, and wild oranges.

The river's banks are thronged with game—zebras, antelopes, elephants, buffaloes; in the desert plains, gnu, eland, and deer of all kinds, with guttural names ending in "bok." Besides there are lions, wolves, leopards, and wild boars; and in the marshes and river basins herds of unwieldy hippopotami bask and play. What a paradise for a naturalist!

In the tangled reeds and giant sedges, vast flocks of waterfowl, pelicans, and flamingoes wade or fly. Further afield, pheasants and partridges, and in the veldt, the ostrich and secretary bird abound. So plentiful was the game, says Livingstone, that our party had frequently to shout to the elephants and buffaloes which blocked our way. One cannot tell half the wonders that are to be read of in the two books of the heroic Livingstone. All young people love them. Surely a nobler, purer explorer never lived—not a spot rests on his honoured name. And like him was his memorable father-in-law, Moffat—true Christian gentlemen and devoted missionaries.

The centre of Africa is a great tableland, five to six thousand feet above the sea, high enough to keep the atmosphere cool and fever-free. There are two ways into Zambesia. You may land on the low, swampy, fever-heated east coast, and proceed up one of the shallow branches of the Zambesi. The dense, deadly, tropical jungle must be quickly passed; no white man can stay there and live. Only two of the mouths of the Zambesi can be ascended by steamers, and the Portuguese claim both of these. But lately England has demanded that the Zambesi, like the Congo, shall be open to the commerce of the world; and it seems to be likely so settled after all.

The rapids on the Upper Zambesi are a more serious matter. In the far future locks may be dug or light railways laid past the falls; but at present there is nothing to be done but to land and load a mule or donkey train.

But on land, the mysterious tsetse fly hinders travel. It is a common-looking insect, not unlike a large house-fly (see cut, perfectly harmless to men, goats or donkeys, but to oxen or horses its bite means death. The only plan is to avoid the tsetse districts altogether.

The road most followed is that through Bechuanaland. The emigrant lands at the Cape of Good Hope, and starts northward by the railway through the winding valleys of Hottentot land, past wonderful vineyards, through the waste Karoo. North again past Kimberley and the dusty diamond country to Vryburg, where the iron horse stops.

Here he changes into a strong, dusty coach, drawn by eight sinewy mules, and is jolted, shaken, and hurried on through Bechuanaland, some 500 miles. Then he mounts a large, roomy waggon, yoked with numerous oxen. The driver carries a mighty whip, with a lash forty feet long, which he cracks like a gun Roads there are none. Great boulders strew the way. Sometimes the waggon sinks up to the axles in a muddy pit or torrent. At night the drivers form laager, that is, make a circle or camp of the waggons, and allow the oxen to graze. This takes time, but Mr. Rhodes is pushing on his railway, and soon Fort Salisbury will be its terminus and the capital of Zambesia.

The soil varies greatly. Here it is a deep loam, which one day will bear mighty harvests. There it is a stony, barren veldt, with frequent "kopjes," or granite domes (see cut). In other places it is lifeless, desert. What draws white men there? What do they all seek? One word tells the secret—"gold!" The rocks glitter with gold; each hillside, the bed of every stream reveal it.

And now comes the strangest part of our story. In ancient times, so long ago that dates are wanting, a foreign race held the country. They built great round towers of granite, and long circular walls and forts of fantastic zigzag masonry. They also came for gold, and have left furnaces, clay crucibles, and smelting works, scattered over acres of the rough hillside.

It is in vain to ask who were these people; no inscriptions remain to tell us. *Idols, carvings, pottery remain, but no* records. Some people think Mashona is the land of Ophir, of which we read in 1 Kings 9. 28.

Turning again to our picture, notice a portrait of the Hon. Cecil Rhodes, late Premier of Cape Colony. Lobengula was, until recently, the warlike chief of the *Matabele*. He is shown administering justice at his kraal at Buluwayo. The other chief below is Khama, chief of the Bamangwato. He is ten years younger than Lobengula, and has a noble character. He is said to be the best example in Africa of what a black ruler of good instincts, early trained in Christianity, may become. He was trained by Moffat. He is a total abstainer, and will allow no strong drink to be sold or stored in his country. We also show some very characteristic heads of native men and women. There is a steamer on Lake Tanganyika, an ox team crossing a river, musical instruments, and Bechuana weapons.

KEEP A CLEAN MOUTH, BOYS.

A distinguished author says. "I resolved when I was a child never to use a word I could not pronounce before my mother." He kept his resolution, and became a pure-minded, noble, honoured gentleman. His rule and example are worthy of imitation.

Boys readily learn a class of low, vulgar expressions, which are never heard in respectable circles. The utmost care of the parents will scarcely prevent it. Of course, no one thinks of girls as being so much exposed to this peril. We cannot imagine a decent girl using words she would not utter before her father and mother.

Such vulgarity is thought by some boys to be "smart," "the next thing to swearing," and "not so wicked;" but it is a habit which leads to profanity and fills the mind with evil thoughts. It vulgarizes and degrades *the soul, and prepares the* way for many of the gross and fearful sins which now corrupt society.—The Christian.

Mother's Boys.

Yes, I know there are stains on my car-
pet,
The trace of small muddy boots,
And I see your fair tapestry glowing,
All spotless with blossoms and fruits

And I know that my walls are disfigured
With prints of small fingers and hands,
And that your own household most truly
In immaculate purity stands.

And I know that my parlour is littered
With many old treasures and toys;
While your own is in daintiest order,
Unharmed by the presence of boys

And I know that my room is invaded
Quite boldly all hours of the day,
While you sit in yours unmolested
And dream the soft quiet away.

Yes, I know there are four little bedsides,
Where I must stand watchful each
night,
While you can go out in your carriage,
And shine in your dresses so bright.

Now, I think I'm a neat little woman,
I like my house orderly, too,
And I'm fond of all dainty belongings,
Yet would not change places with you

No! Keep your fair home with its order,
Its freedom from bother and noise,
And keep your own fanciful leisure—
But leave me my four noble boys!