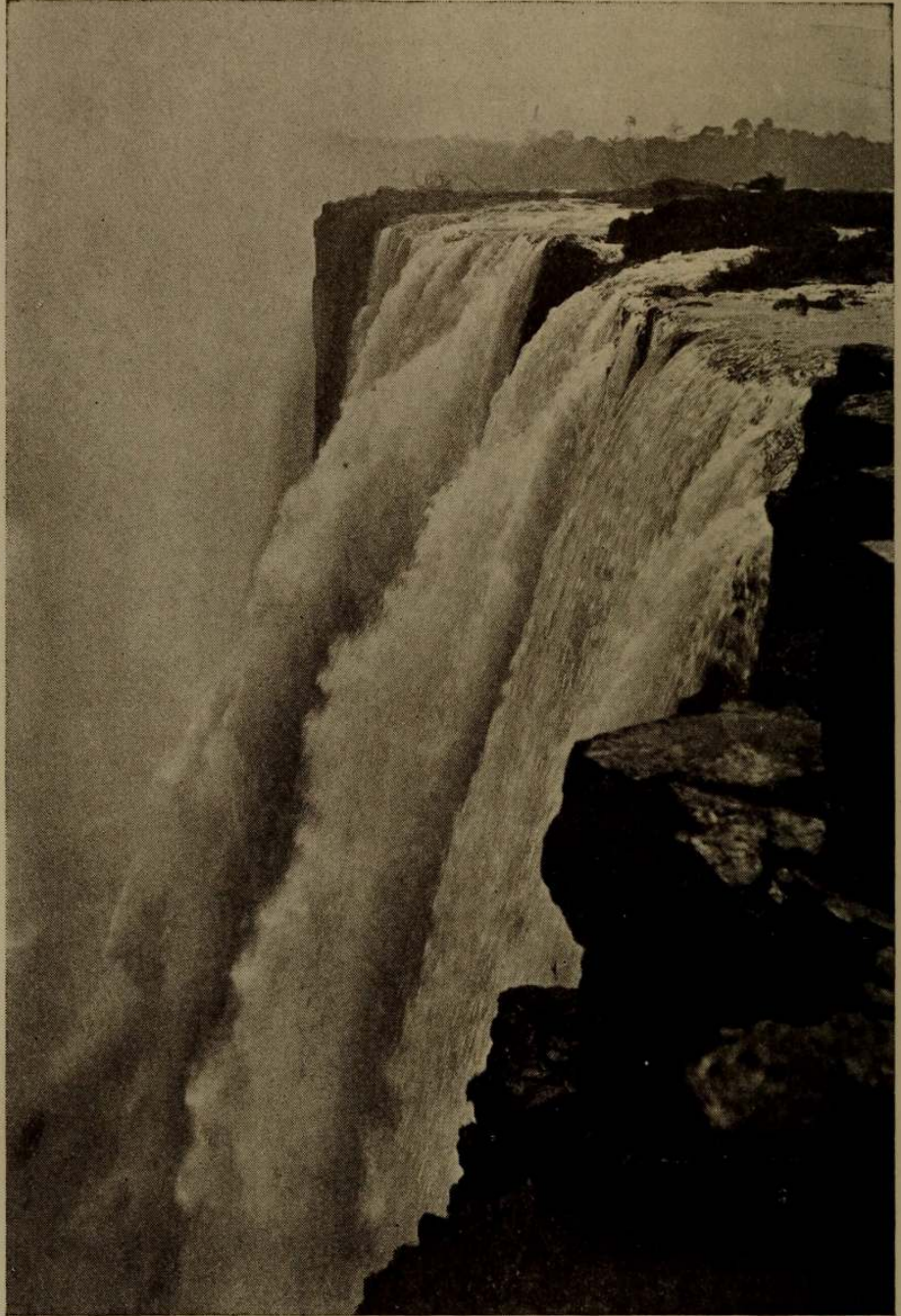




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UNDER SOUTHERN STARS



VICTORIA FALLS
OR FALLS OF THE ZAMBESI

UNDER
SOUTHERN STARS

*A Diary-Tour
Through South Africa*

BY
CHARLOTTE C. DAVENPORT

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1923

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by Charlotte C. Davenport
1923

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TO

W. B. D.

WHOSE DAILY SUGGESTIONS AND UNCEASING
"WHITTLING OF THE PENCILS" PROVED HIM
TO BE A MOST EFFICIENT CO-WORKER

10/29/68

PREFACE

ANTICIPATION—reality—and retrospection. Three great adjuncts to travel! All with a setting of their own, and all possessing an irresistible charm. Perhaps of the three, the claim of retrospection calls as loudly as do the others.

Looking back on the South African Tour we recall, with so much interest, a country, in which we no longer feel ourselves absolute strangers — and in that country, acquaintances and courtesies met with, and friendships formed.

To Mr. Percy M. Clark, F.R.G.S., F.R.C.I., of Victoria Falls, Rhodesia, I am indebted for my illustrations, and hereby tender him my sincere thanks for giving me permission to utilize his personal photographs.

Possibly for him, and for some one of those with whom our paths so delightfully crossed, the following pages may revive a pleasant memory.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

VICTORIA FALLS — OR FALLS OF ZAMBESI

VIEW FROM PIAZZA OF VICTORIA FALLS HOTEL

ON THE ZAMBESI

A NATIVE

A TYPICAL RICKSHA BOY

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LEAVING NEW YORK ON R. M. S. P. "ORBITA"

Out from the whirl, the undying whirl of throngs,
Out where the waves sing lullabies and songs,
Rhythmically soft at times — they lull to sleep,
Forever chanting of the rolling deep.

Out where the great red ball at early dawn,
Proclaims in Eastern terms — a day is born,
And where 'mid golden trails, like royal guest —
He steps, at eventide, within the West.

Out where the great ships plough their pathless way,
Under a brilliant light of sunlit day,
And out beyond horizon's sense of sight,
We know they're ploughing through the depths of night.

Never a halt! — though weirdly through the air,
Comes message to us from the "Over There";
Uncanny medium; invisible; unheard —
It brings o'er scores of miles a friendly word.

What though alone! All — seemingly alone —
Naught but the sea to gaze upon, and yonder dome!
Great fleet of ships, — beyond our ken — sail on, —
Our great mid-ocean friends! We're not alone.

Even the waves seem friendly! While in air
The Gulls are hovering round — now here, now there,
Flapping their great white wings, so near at hand,
Till coming storm quick counsels "Seek the land."



Anon at times, with graceful, curving sweep —
Come flying fish to tell us of the deep;
Not surface-lovers these — nor prone to roam,
Just sport awhile — then dive to hidden home.

Life everywhere! All life! We're not alone,
Just represent a part! As humans known.
Part of the whole! Ours but a single phase
Of Life that manifests a thousand ways.

Life — that for home, the depths of ocean share,
And those, with feathered garb, that seek the air.
Each growing thing! Each tree! Each bird and flower —
All speak the same — The Great Creative Power.

ENGLAND

Old ivied England! Whose familiar tongue
Is dear unto our hearts, — because "Our Own";
Because our blood — in part — is British blood,
Our aims, in common, stand for general good.

Southampton's environs sound worthy call
To those who come to "bide a wee." — To all
Who love old England's time-worn stones —
Her lanes, her byways, and her vine-clad homes!

Here bones of Sothern, Sr., lie at rest;
Perchance the great comedian, mid the blest —
Is thrilling throngs! Holding deserving sway
As Lord Dundreary in time-honored Play.



Then Netley Abbey, not far distant, claims
A halt, since 13th Century charm remains.
Within its cloister, silent and undisturbed, —
No chant of old monastic prayer is heard.

And Winchester — whose grand Cathedral stands
Mocking “Old Time,” though mellowed by its hand.
Within its walls a sacred hush remains,
And on its stones are writ immortal names.

Here at Southampton, — England’s friendly gate, —
We’ll step ashore, — and for awhile, await
Another ship from out that Ocean Fleet,
One that will bear us far upon the deep.

Beyond where waters of the colder North,
Roll down to join those tempered by the South;
Where brilliant bougainvillæa richly grows,
And diamonds sleep near where the Congo flows.

MADEIRA

Like Mermaid Isle abode — up from the Sea
Madeira rises! Offering welcome free
To those who tarry on her green-clad shore,
And share with her — the charms she holds in store.

We gaze on terraced land, and from the pier
And clambering up the hillsides here and there,
Are homes with cheery look; ’mid verdant green —
We thought somewhat, ’twas like Italian scene.



We're told ascent of yonder mount worth while,
If one would see a stretch of country smile
Its sweet content in viewing far and wide
Its fruits and flowers abloom on every side.

Here then we'll halt! We'll let the waves roll on!
More, ever coming, we can sail upon;
E'en Father Neptune with no hint of roar,
Bids us, in whisperings soft — "To shore! To shore!"

Calm is his sea, and blue sky overhead
Holds sunlit keeping over palms, which spread
Their fronds at top of rounded trunk — quite bare,
Like flagstaffs waving pennants in midair.

On shore are flowers! Masses of varied flowers!
Which lift their heads and spread in floral showers.
While well-nigh jungle-like rich foliage lives
Its life of beauty in the wealth it gives.

From summit there, one looks on groves of pines
And hardy scattered vineyards, whence the wines —
Madeira's Own! Longtime her rightful pride,
The fruitage of this very mountain side.

This summit — up 3,000 feet and more,
Should surely tempt one, both from ship and shore.
Make ascent leisurely! Go *up* by rail!
Not so return! *Toboggan down that trail.*

But e'er the start — look yonder o'er the sea,
Off to where waves and sky reach their eternity!
Myth-like and beautiful! So mellowed into one!
And just so haply — Our Madeira — day is done.



AGAIN AT SEA

Off once again! Out on the rolling deep!
The stars our watchers during hours of sleep,
The great moon mounts on high her guard to keep,
The while our ship moves on.

Each little star increases in its gleam,
Each planet glows with doubly brilliant beam,
The full moon fuller, the mightier it would seem,
The while our ship moves on.

Each passing wave is singing its own song, —
A sort of lullaby, the whole night long —
Whose rhythm deepens at the break of dawn,
The while our ship moves on.

The Great Creator, whose unceasing care
Is powerful on sea — as everywhere —
Is guarding now "His Own"! His children here —
The while our ship moves on.

STILL ROLLING ON

Twelve days gone by — into oblivion gone —
The while we've sailed these waters on and on
Since last old Mother Earth we trod. The morn
We left Madeira sun-wrapt and alone.



Only one glimpse of coast in distance seen
In all this run! And that, now, like a dream;
At best, a bit of skyline — faintly grey,
Which faded soon in hazy, far-away.

Cape Verde, they tell us! — jut of Afric's shore,
Seen for a spell — and passed. Then nothing more!
Naught but our finny friends, who came anon
With splash, and dash — and curving dive — were gone.

Thus passed each day! Like to the one before!
With sports on deck and dances! "Just one more."
With nothing in the wide, wide world to do —
Activity is game the voyage through.

E'en equatorial crossing fails to cause
A lull in sports, or temporary pause.
A Something doing! Always an active day
For those who float not idle hours away!

How far agone those waters of the North —
And old Southampton, whence we journeyed forth;
The days are well-nigh numbering seventeen,
And we in close approach to unknown scene.

All joys — and sorrows too — their end will reach,
'Tis thus with all. Life will this lesson teach;
But in *this* lesson, pleasures alone will blend —
In memories of this voyage now to end.



CAPE TOWN

“Long looked for come at last!” is adage old
And here exemplified — as high and bold
The Table Mountain to our vision dawns
With Cape Town clasped — as — ’twere — within its arms.

South Africa! Of which we’ve longtime read —
In childhood’s days, as country full of dread,
Filled with a wild, scant-dressed, untutored race —
Whose ritual — our duty to efface.

Here now we stand on Afric’s sunny shore,
Gone are youth’s heathen with the days of yore;
Under the white man’s tutelage for whom they’ve toiled;
Themselves they’ve helped, and thus have helped the
world.

Not that the atmosphere is always calm,
At times — to clear it — needs a heavy “balm.”
If needs be — special weight is brought to bear
To stop unrest — and clarify the air.

Still on the whole they tell us — ’tis serene,
A great improvement on the “might have been” —
And Africa is driving — so ’tis said —
Her car of progress steadily ahead.



When Bishop Heber wrote his old-time hymn,
Which little ones were duly taught to sing,
His words, as prophecies, he little knew
Would ever prove so literally true.

“Where Afric’s sunny fountains” — he affirms —
“Run down their golden sand”—which surely turns
Upon these mountains — we assert! — and present day —
And all their mass of treasure held in clay.

Mountains so running o’er with precious stones —
Their matchless flash-lights hidden in earth’s tombs;
And ore — the richest, golden ore, one finds
In these stupendous, barely opened mines.

What words — we question — could he find to say —
That good, old Bishop of a bygone day!
The “sunny fountain” — and his “golden sand”
Have found expression in a golden land.

With thought of Africa — we visualize
At once the names of heroes! Men whose lives
Were spent — at least their best of years —
Not as today they’d come — but pioneers.

A daring list! Each worthy of the name
Which places him on pinnacle of fame!
Each going boldly into weal or woe,
To face the Savage — whether friend or foe.



A host of Braves! Take Livingstone — far back
And Stanley — following closely in his track!
Stanley — the rescuer! what but for him —
Might not the fate of Livingstone have been?

And later — Rhodes! Whose name will ever be
Synonymous with dauntless bravery!
Matopos Hills will ring — as they have rung —
With White Man's victory through persuasive tongue.

If asked what name would longest Time defy
We'd answer — "Name of Stanley cannot die."
And for colossal aim whose fruit still grows,
We'd place a memory wreath on Cecil Rhodes.

None but the most intrepid would embark
To enter Wild Man's land — the "Densely Dark";
We wonder do the present reapers know
The debt to those great, daring men they owe?

Those early comers! Those of the far-back years,
Surely paid heavier toll as pioneers!
Of such was Stanley, strong to civilize
As bold explorer under savage eyes.

How draw the line? Where many a quiet name
Could fill — in justice — niche in Hall of Fame!
Where to begin with such a list of Braves —
Whose mortal only gathered into graves —



Is marching on with steadfast, spirit-hold,
With some great daring! Still the Ego bold
Is over darkness holding White Man's sway
Throughout this great rich Continent today.

And now for Cape Town! We must make survey
And wandering from imposing looking pier
We seek some distance hence — a thoroughfare
And find the shopping district centers here.

Though short — this main street — known as Adderley,
Shows business up-to-date activity,
Its windows lure with souvenirs. We find
Another chance — men say — for woman-kind.

Can this be Africa? If this be so —
Where the good Bishop's views of long ago!
Faded like dreams of night before the Sun,
Since resurrection morn has here begun.

No "bowing down" — one sees — "to wood and stone,"
No heathen visible! All overgrown
With handsome buildings — modern row on row —
And winsome homes the farther out we go.

CAPE TOWN'S SUBURBAN HOMES

Out on a mountain side — above the shore,
Nestling on grassy slopes, far off from roar
And wash of sea. O'erlooking foamy crests.
And well-nigh hidden are these human nests.



Hidden by shrubbery clustering round
In rich profusion. Clambering on ground
And stretching up their vari-colored heads
Till Land about seems changed to floral beds.

WILD FLOWERS OF AFRICA

Wild flowers of Africa! What vies with you
Save "Bow of Promise" in prismatic hue?
No human tills the ground around you spread,
No hand — save the Creator's lifts your head.

Offerings of Paradise — let down to show
How beautiful the flowers in Heaven grow,
You — that are called Protea on the earth —
How freely, on the hillside, have you birth.

We see them in July! A Winter test — !
December blooms will show them at their best.
E'en bonny Scottish Highlands ne'er have known
The feathery heather on these hillsides grown.

Of Afric's Flora — what can mortal say?
How vain th' attempt their wonder to convey!
God's masterpieces! Naught but Power Divine
Could coloring like to these, and form combine.



FLOWERS UNSEEN

We think perhaps — though beautiful this scene,
This now at hand may be but passing dream,
Bright glimpses given of glories yet unseen —
Visions of fadeless flowers mid meadows green.

These but a feeble prototype perchance
Of blooms whose glory "Somewhere" may enhance —
Beyond all mortal ken! Some bright expanse
Reached through transition as we wander thence.

OVER THERE

Somewhere are flowers in blooming,
And somewhere is warble of bird,
The perfume so sweetly enduring,
And the warble the loveliest heard.

Somewhere are streamlets a-flowing,
Both limpid and rhythmical too;
Somewhere are sunbeams a-glowing,
And ever a-glowing anew.

Somewhere are voices heard singing
A song as of Heavenly birth,
We wonder if angels are bringing
Fresh garlands to drop on the earth.



Somewhere sweet strains, as of music,
 Heard soft — yet so beautifully clear,
Like dewdrops on rose-petal resteth,
 So fall they on soul-entranced ear.

Somewhere are hillsides resounding
 With laughter! Sweet rippings of joy!
And glades — with deep forest surrounding —
 Where harmony knows no alloy.

Vistas — with verdure o'erhanging
 Bid flickering sunbeams to play,
And dimly at pathway's far ending,
 Light glimmers and pointeth the way

To valleys beyond — where low whisp'rings
 Are soft as their meadows are green,
And lure one to peace-giving dreamings
 Mid sylvan or pastoral scene.

Somewhere the quiet pervading —
 Is born of a rapture Divine,
Somewhere no cause for soul yearning,
 Fruition throughout endless time.

Somewhere the heart groweth younger,
 And in spirit — finds freedom to roam;
That "Somewhere" is just over yonder;
 Where together — we'll know it as Home.



ON TO KIMBERLEY

Cape Town and Table Mountain passed from sight,
And at the moment — Kimberley the goal!
Two partial days we journey and one night
Through vineyard-lands and irrigated soil.

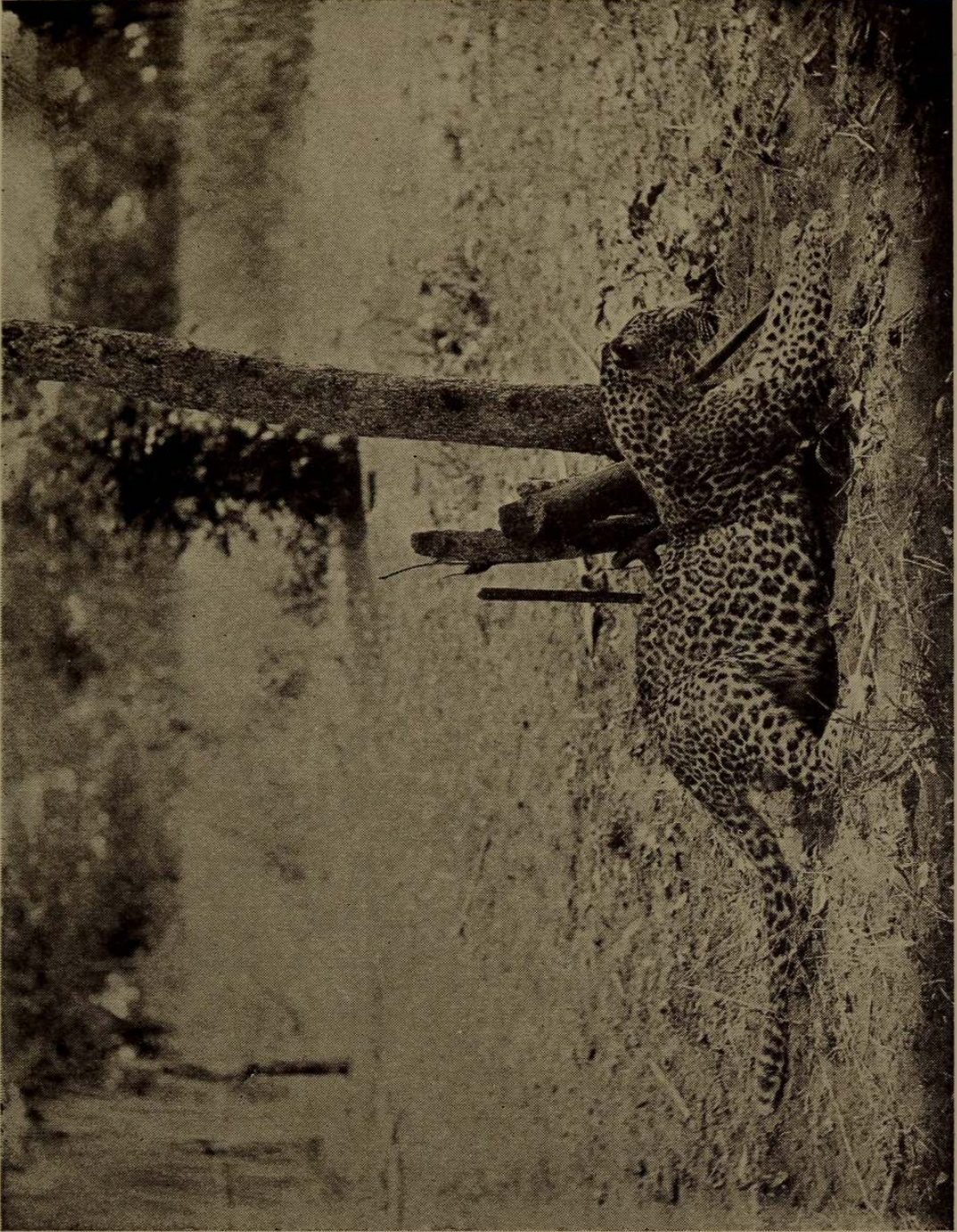
Through tracts of fruit trees, all in embryo state,
And acres ploughed and ready for the grain —
A twittering bird says "Nature is awake"
And beauteous Spring will greet us soon again.

For miles — the mountain range and we are friends;
Tall callas spread themselves in wild array
And marguerites — and golden bush — which lends
Itself to scattering sunshine on the way.

Just here — a marguerite lifts orange head,
A stranger blossom! new, in hue, to me;
A little African! And one 'tis said
Indigenous to this side of the Sea.

'Tis sparsely settled — this same railroad route,
And not with flowers — the land entirely strewn;
'Tis winter here! A fact 'tis well to note,
For country at its best — we've come too soon.

But day wore on — and mountains closed us in,
Round curves and cuttings made our winding way,
A sunset brilliant shone on upper rim
Of bald, gigantic wall of granite grey.



A NATIVE



Sunset that bathed in glory peaks in line
Three — like to triplets of Hex River Range;
Sunset which showered on clouds its sweet combine
Soft blues and rose — and later came the change —

A crescent moon and twinkling stars had birth
And winked complacently — one after one!
We thought on *us!* We wanderers on the earth,
Thus musing — shadows deepened. Day was done.

* * * * *

With dawn — the land — like to our early West,
Where here and there a mesa breaks the Plain,
A few stray stations showing life. The rest —
The sky — the soil, the tufts — all day the same.

The same great Veldt — extending far and wide —
If in the States — we'd say — "Out on the Plains."
So little seen — Aye! Nothing here — aside
From stretch of country sore athirst for rains.

And now alighting — "Au revoir" to train!
We reach one source of Africa's great wealth,
One of her three known special points of gain
Her diamonds here lay slumbering in the earth.

Perchance this morn we walked o'er quarts — nay tons!
Of sparkling diamonds in their secret cells
Sleeping ensconced in strata blue, which holds
In darkest dark — the brilliant, hidden gems.

We've stood and gazed into the depths beneath,
So full of wondrous wonderment and wealth,
So full of speculative cuttings deep —
Whence are brought orbs to shine on outer earth.



What fortunes made! What losses, too, sustained;
A gamble this! One of alluring sort!
Not every dreamer has his dream attained,
But Hope is uppermost in gambler's heart.

Visions of fortunes! Thoughts of those shining gems
Bring longings for — e'en of uncertain earth!
The vision haunts! A glittering bright, which tends
To show ourselves enrolled in untold wealth.

* * * * *

Mines — Gems — and Kimberley! All interlaced!
One thinks not of the One, but three in One!
Attractive homes — hotel and club — all traced
To those same shares in stock — we'd like to own.

ON TO BULAWAYO AND MATOPOS

Two days and nights the train steals on its way,
Farther and farther back the diamond fields,
Quite steadily — not briskly — one might say —
We move through dull, uninteresting scenes.

Miles upon miles of sameness on the route,
The natives selling local skins and food —
And toys — and necklaces at half-hour halt,
All showing much of cleverness, though crude.

No worriment regarding fashions here,
The little ones find joy in nature's garb,
Their elders too — in vari-colored wear —
For fashion-plates, show total disregard.



Thus on we move — till in the early morn,
At Bulawayo halt — to seek a crest,
'Tis here that Cecil Rhodes — the stirring man!
And Afric's ardent friend is laid to rest.

Thence on, some twenty miles, by motor car —
Out to Matopos! Pilgrims to a shrine!
So weird the view! So bold! With naught to mar;
But rock-bound solitude rewards the climb —

Up over winding road through Chaos Land,
Up where the wildness echoes to the breeze,
Where boulders group and pile on either hand,
Clasping their arms round cacti and lone trees.

Up where the boldness mates with solitude
What but upheaval huge could give it birth?
Perchance some planet in a starry feud —
Or gone astray — mayhap! — had dropped to earth.

On — and still on — the rocks the leaders on —
Till at the top — one stands within a group.
We face the world — as first the world began,
Wildness and chaos — wheresoe'er you look.

So lone! So sombre! Such titanic spot!
We pause in very speech, and lightly tread,
A bold and consecrated burial plot
Where rest, in silent solitude, the dead.

In center, tomb of Cecil Rhodes alone —
Beyond — the grave of Dr. Jameson —
A monument still farther — whereupon
Are names which speak for bravery of men.



Barely in prime of life was Cecil Rhodes,
With name attached to worthy deeds achieved,
Though lost to sight — these widespread deeds live on,
Suggesting schemes colossal had he lived.

Perchance his greatest — “Cape-to-Cairo-Route,”
Which some day distant, will be realized,
Too early yet — that scheme to bear its fruit,
The wherewithal has not been crystallized.

His vision clear pierced through that dream of dreams,
With hands thrown back — on pedestal erect —
The dream goes bravely on! It almost seems
His eyes on distant Cairo still are set.

His was a life of keenest strong desire!
With obstacles — a will to overcome!
Well-nigh his last words show the warmth of fire
Ablaze! “So much to do — so little done.”

Plain is his slab — and round it natural guard,
Just mammoth boulders marking chosen site,
A site — (his words) “Whence one can view the world,”
A crest on which a full moon rests tonight.

It rests on graves — on rocks — and monument
To Alan Wilson and his men who fell,
To hold vast Afric’s portions — what been spent
At cost of English lives — what man can tell?



LEAVING BULAWAYO

From Bulawayo — on, another night
And part of day — Through country plainly seen
Yields more of interest — more of native life,
More undulating lands, and living green —

Victoria Falls, the point at which we'll pause,
So named by Livingstone, in years ago
The first white man to view this roaring plunge
And we now sight the rising mist therefrom.

For miles 'tis seen! Like shimmering bridal veil
Flung to the breeze and towering toward the sky
A thousand feet, they say, it can attain —
With great Zambesi's waters running high.

We note the birds! Dear free and twittering things!
And note as well what plainly one doth say —
One, quite unsocial both with foes and friends
And greets one with "Go away! Go away."

Here blacks are black! Black in their native lair,
A goodly sight! Some quite Adonis-like,
Many with scars on forehead, or on ear —
Denoting tribe or scant-clad antitype.

One little knew, when standing quite apart,
Shoulders thrown back, and well-poised head erect —
What perfect model for the sculptor's art —
One, that no master-hand would e'er reject.



VICTORIA FALLS

Would that a vision fair be given me
With power to sense the all — within my ken
A scope of thought t' interpret what I see
And use it — at my bidding — through the pen.

Immense! Intense! No common word can strike
At just the truth in feelings such as these;
Awed at the sight — one feels so atom-like —
We're mum — and dumb. Thoughts scatter to the breeze.

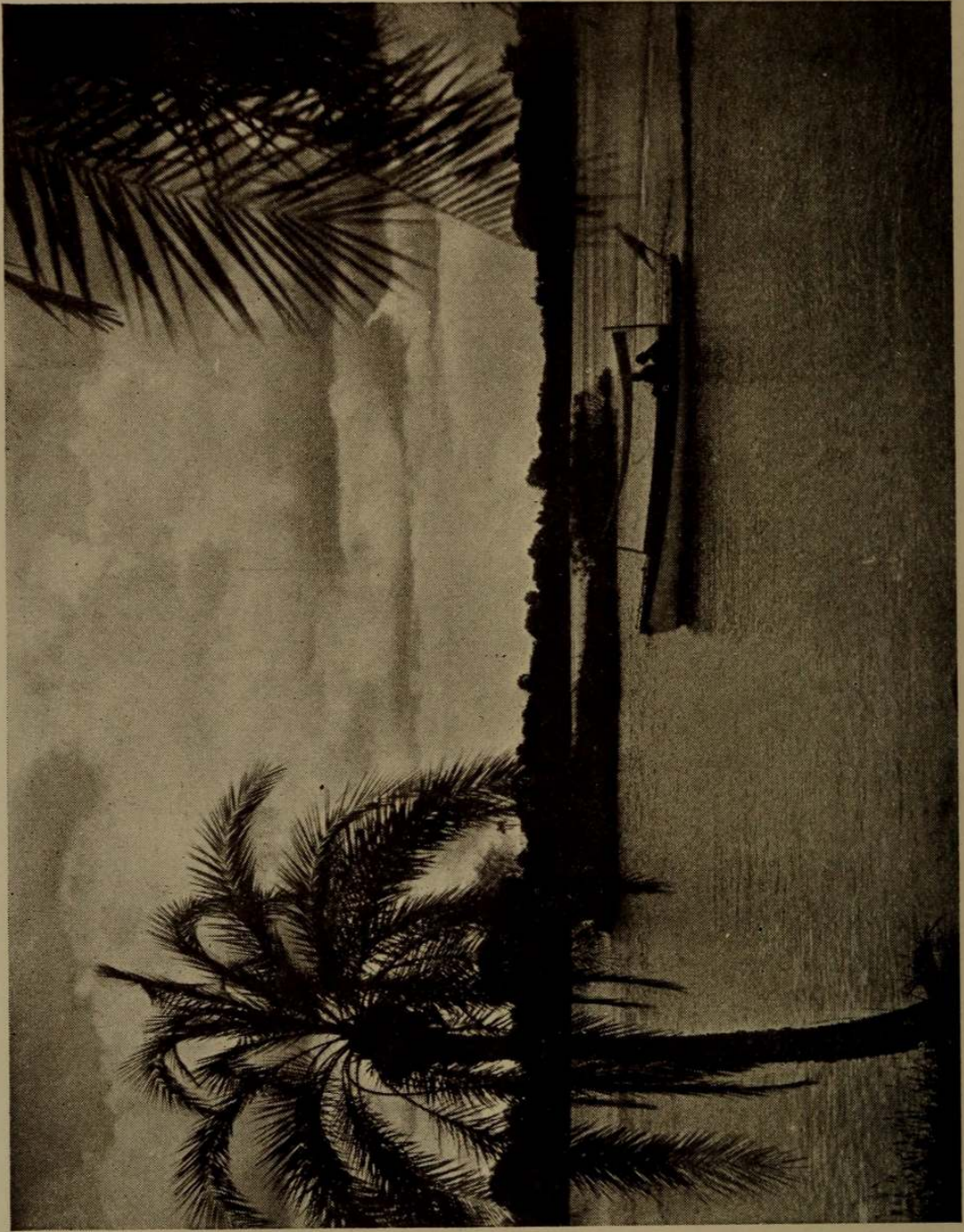
Oh, so sublime! Forest, Foliage and Falls!
One feels in this big universe alone!
God's wonder-works are these! It surely calls
For Power Divine! Not mine — more than my own —

To give in choicest, most expressive lines
Grandeur which causes silence and a start —
And gazing thus — in all the world — one finds
Falls of th' Zambesi has no counterpart.

Eternal Falls! Wild and tumultuous dash!
Whose copious spray keeps yonder trees in tears.
Its plunge 400 feet! Tempestuous clash!
Whose echo — we shall hear all coming years.



VIEW FROM PIAZZA OF VICTORIA FALLS HOTEL



ON THE ZAMBESI



FALLS OF THE ZAMBESI

Shall we ever forget the day we spent
On the broad Zambesi River?
With the nameless calm — of a sunlit morn,
Not a leaf showing slightest quiver.

Shall we ever forget the islands there
And the vegetable-ivory growing?
In that jungle crush — just a woodland hush —
Or a bird to its mate low calling.

Where every tree was smothered in vines
All sending up tendrils and climbing,
And the love-beans too — to be loyal and true —
Did their tender love-making and twining.

Can we ever forget that crystal stream
With the palms on the shore reflected?
When the kettle sang songs for the tea and scones,
And the hunger so haply abated?

Can we ever forget at the bend of the shore
Where branches were kissing the water —
And the plumed reeds rose — in their straight, packed rows
Like guards under marching order?

Can we ever forget the crocodile's eye
As he blinked at our boat in passing?
Taking ease in the sun — till the day was done
With ever an indolent napping.



Can we ever forget the calm we knew
While lingering at Boro Boedur?
To those who well know — 'twas like to the flow
Of this charmed Zambesi River.

Can we ever forget that perfect rest
Which twilight but failed to shorten —
When we watched the play — of the rainbowed spray,
With the world and its cares forgotten?

Can we ever forget the evening's rest
With only the night-sounds calling —
When the full moon's beams — made silvery streams,
Of Zambesi's great waters a-falling?

We'll bid it come back to us out of the past,
This rest — that is all enduring —
We'll call for the calm of the sunlit morn,
And the quiet and peace of the gloaming.

THE RETURNING POINT

The turn is made! It means the homeward turn;
We've reached our farthest point on Afric's sands,
Wise to have come — and thus so haply learn
Something of this vast Continent's great lands.

The wheels revolve, and we are moving on —
To Mafeking retracing Railroad Ride,
Here we turn Eastward — whereupon
In two more nights we reach Johannesburg.



From Mafeking — for miles a level stretch,
And but for scattered trees, quite prairie-like —
Then sunset follows — and the night-fall hush
Brings deeper tones — and roadside fades from sight.

But with the early morn and crispy air
We know full well we've reached Johannesburg —
Chimneys and "dumps" of cyanine all there —
Confirm the truth of comments we have heard.

JOHANNESBURG

Midway between two seas — on ridge of gold —
Johannesburg fills actively her days,
Steady and sure — her progress seems enrolled
In big industrial and broadcast ways.

This ridge — or "Rand" — for sixty miles extends,
Holding its "pebbles" well concealed from sight.
Immense, the output! Well-nigh *half* she sends
Of all known mines, in treasured golden weight.

"Witwatersrand" — the name by which 'tis known —
Translated simply means — "Whitewatersridge."
This — since past years to thirty-five have grown,
Has proved itself a truly golden ledge.

Johannesburg has hillside suburbs — green,
Attractive — both in homes and gardens fair —
Enclosed in hedges high — a goodly screen,
Showing the trim-cut look of English care.



JOHANNESBURG AND PRETORIA

Then just two easy-going hours from here —
And in Pretoria we find ourselves well pleased,
With quiet, self-respecting sort of air —
She points to lovely homes embowered in trees.

Here governmental dignity has placed
A costly Union Building on the Heights,
Whence finest city view is well embraced,
And high officials guard the Union-Rights.

Like emerald set in classic mount of gold —
So is Pretoria clasped in setting green,
Encircled by her glorious hills of old —
She fills her peaceful rôle of modest queen.

She's fair to view! Attractive naturally!
And nature kindly helped by constant care;
To do full justice — yet speak truthfully —
Her days pass pleasantly mid outlook fair.

EN ROUTE TO DURBAN

Off once again! Five hundred miles and more —
Pretoria, to Durban on the coast —
A day and night — at twenty miles an hour,
Fair Afric's rate — but little more, at best.



Judicious rate! One sees the country well —
This portion too — is well worth lingering through,
In early day we pass Majurba Hill —
And later, Ladysmith comes into view.

Here naturally, Lord Roberts comes to mind —
With thought of him — the thought of those who fell;
The gallant men — by whom these hills were lined.
These Hills of Sacrifice dark tales could tell.

Hard by — a monument — in view from train —
A memory tablet to Lord Robert's son!
He, too, paid tribute in his country's name,
Leaving but memory now — and this cold stone.

We'll turn the page so full of Life's young blood
And seek to find a brighter, sunnier theme.
Both wild and picturesque this curving road,
Where every mile presents great change of scene.

More than 5,000 feet — the gradual drop —
To Indian Ocean, from Johannesburg —
The fall far greater, — largely doubling up,
As train crawls down to flower-strewn Maritzburg.

Here Flora spreads herself with lavish hand —
Poinsettias — flaming bright — claim little care,
White ones as well — so creamy white — all fanned
By sweetly subtle, wild-flower-scented air.



We've come through strangely grand, fantastic land,
Surely some action past has left strong mark,
Where hills keep rolling, as 'twere hand o'er hand —
And shadowy cañons force their way through rock.

Cañons, where sunset rays so rarely touch,
And if they do — 'tis but with ghostly lights —
Those rays are painting now with lavish brush
The rolling hill-tops and the crag-like heights.

Anon we have a vale spread out to view —
"Valley" — they call it — "Of a Thousand Hills" —
This — e'er the earth is clothed in starlight hue,
The evening picture, that our vision fills.

Then slowly down to level of the sea,
Down where the lights of Durban are aglow,
Where waves foam in and out with careless glee,
The Indian Ocean's song of endless flow.

DURBAN

We walk her Promenade — and think of Cannes —
Far-away Cannes — on Mediterranean shore;
Perhaps more palms, and softer air will fan
One's brow, and subtly feed one's languor more.

Perhaps her flora grows with brighter hue,
Syringas and Mimosas try in vain
Her brilliant bougainvillæa to outdo, —
Which vies, in turn, with bright poinsettias' flame.



Up on the slopes — with vistas of the sea,
Are nestled homes mid flower-strewn gardens rare —
In residential quarter — “The Berea” —
Th’ *élite* of Durban haply centers there.

“India transplanted” — one is prone to say,
Her sons have come in masses to this shore,
Such overwhelming numbers, — that today
As law exists — they find no entry more.

Perhaps there’s more of Oriental tone,
Enhanced by Zulus’ flashing colors worn;
Their women swathed in red or yellow gown,
Their men of all superfluous garments shorn.

Albeit the ricksha boys are clothed full well —
Their startling head-gear waving high in air,
Their rainbow wraps or girdles plainly tell
The Zulu fondness for flamboyant wear.

To see their kraals or huts — and native life —
’Tis well to drive through suburbs where they hive,
A chief perchance you’ll meet — with surplus wife,
The family numberless, of every size.

Continue to the River Unkomass,
And cross the drift, and on to river’s mouth,
You’ll cover miles and miles of towering stalks —
The sugar cane of Afric’s wondrous growth.

Sweeping the country far as eye can reach,
Waving on hill-top, then in valley low,
Rolling away — and off — into a hazy stretch —
The waving lands where sugar cane doth grow.



Winter resort — this Durban by the sea!
Quiet for quiet folk — or gay for gay —
Here bathers face the rolling surf with glee,
The wily shark being wisely kept at bay.

Here hundreds gather with the season on —
Hotels both well equipped and finely run,
Gay is the scene one daily looks upon,
A semi-tropic flora, and a golden sun.

DURBAN TO BLOEMFONTEIN

Our route retraces far as Ladysmith,
And there diverges toward the "Mount aux Sources" —
Up face of which, our engine tugged for breath,
As back and forth we zig-zagged on our course —

Which led us up — not to the summit quite,
That summit rises plus 10,000 feet,
One of the Drakensburg, which truly might
Be Afric's Rockies of our Continent.

A lofty rampart for 600 miles,
Stretching its fluted peaks like barriers,
Broken its walls in fastnesses and wilds
And keeping stern apart the Provinces.

Durban and Indian Ocean far in rear,
The engine at the Reenan brings a halt,
The summit of the Pass is reached. 'Tis where
Natal and Orange Free State meet and part.



A TYPICAL RICKSHA BOY
OF DURBAN, NATAL



Then on and on — through maize and cattle lands,
Where cattle graze and wander in great droves
Beneath blue sky, a great plateau, that stands
As if alone in space, but for its herds.

The fields far-reaching! — limitless it seems —
Great fields, like to one huge, unbroken floor;
The maize well bagged and hauled by oxen teams —
Long-horned — and numbering twelve, eighteen or more.

Thus did our night and day move slowly on —
And second night still found us, in the main —
Mid maize and cattle lands, but in the morn —
We stopped to rest awhile at Bloemfontein.

BLOEMFONTEIN TO GEORGE

The old-time Capital is Bloemfontein,
And now Commercial Center of the State;
We here found Afric's Winters were no dream,
One truly caught us at a nippy rate.

Then leaving — frigid — by the evening train,
We woke next morn to find a gorgeous sun;
The cold still on, and howling winds the same,
And in addition — not to be out-done —

A rugged land — full of upheavals stern,
At times, great buttes, lit up by morning glow,
Then stretch of plateau-land suggesting grain,
And like to patchwork — *bona fide* snow.



Ascent begins! On engine, steady strain!

In eight short miles, a rise 700 feet —
The going — like to Caterpillar train —
Followed by gradual drop 5,000 feet.

Thus are we making downward, winding way,
The country round-about and hill-slopes green,
The flowering cacti and big stacks of hay
And ostrich farms make cheering change of scene.

Then sunset comes, and with it o'er the Hills,
A showering as of blue — unearthly blue!
A tone no Mediterranean ever yields,
Nor even upper dome has spread to view.

Not deep — like mazarine — nor silvery pale,
No word suggests a tone one never knew,
As if some portal had let fall a veil,
And spread — for just a while — Madonna Blue.

Soon shadows fell, and only brilliant stars
Lit up the Outeniquas, — which, in dead of night
We slowly climbed. High, grey, serrated spurs,
And wildly deep ravines soft hid from sight.

The morning dawned — and we were winding down
O'er wild-flower covered slopes, which oft'times showed —
(Up which they toiled — with courage seeking home)
The same old rock-cut, winding Trekka's Road.

Montague Pass we follow down to George —
Two nights and day from Winds of Bloemfontein;
Those gales can o'er us but in fancy surge,
They slumber now — mid memories "that have been."



GEORGE

To those who for a quiet are in quest,
They'll find it here! Inland six miles from sea;
We say — with Alabama — "Here we rest" —
Haply so well content to "bide a wee."

Then as the days pass on — we move along
And halt at what is called "The Wilderness,"
Unless for isolation — surely wrong
'Tis naught — if not a foul misnomer this.

Here at the Wilderness — through outstretched bough
We watched the billows wash the near-by sands,
And heard the rolling — as with ebb and flow —
They came and told of other far-off lands.

A peace — like heavenly rest is surely found —
On porch beside a huge outspreading tree —
Silence — it seems eternal! Not a sound
Save those white waves of indigo-like sea.

"Friendly" — the house-dog sits, with wagging tail,
And mutely says — "A haven this of rest" —
"The sea — the flowers — the birds — and hill and dale
We all add dream-like, happy hours to guest."

At hand are what are called "Rondavel Rooms" —
These last — like Kaffir huts — good quarters make;
Unique at least! Suggesting antique tombs —
Snow-white, thatched pointed roof — and round in shape.



Then on again, by motor — farther on!

O'er roads and passes — curving with incline,
Mountains hard by — and river's flow, far down,
Great Nature's efforts — reaching the sublime.

Kloofs well-nigh hidden by their shrubbery-screen,
And graceful curves that lap — and lap again —
Could ever earth give lovelier, finer scene?
Enchanting Summer-Land! And we within.

Greatest of all — perhaps — th' Homtini Pass,
A chain of windings! Up with a turn, then down!
A Wonder Land! No art could e'er surpass,
By little earthly — can it be out-done.

Often between two-showered — with shrubbery walls,
Not stone and mortar walls — but nature's own,
So heavy-laden that their verdure falls
Over — and down — in wildwood splendor strewn.

Quite Alpine-like! Yet foliage softer far,
And more luxuriant! Flung round in showers!
Dense undergrowth, and wattle trees which soar,
And with out-pouring hand are spread wild flowers.

Perhaps most lavishly — a yellow bloom,
A blossom — name of which we did not know,
But this we knew — antithesis of gloom!
It spread o'er all the land — a golden glow.

And heather exquisite! So creamy white!
And callas white, a seeming endless store,
Callas as well — whose blooms were black as night;
A rainbow coloring on a floral floor.



So on to Knysna — where again we halt,
Its quiet calls! We're ready for a rest;
Too much — brings not assimilation — but revolt;
Nature, today, has given unsparing feast.

A PEACEFUL MORNING AT KNYSNA

Seated on roadside porch in early day,
We idly watch the hours move slowly on,
Rapidity unknown — 'tis safe to say —
In Knysna-world, by leisure overgrown.

A calm so wonderful! One comes! One goes!
But with an easy gait that knows no time,
Unless the Sabbath! That, all Knysna knows —
And taught them weekly by the church bells' chime.

Here Uncle Ebony comes sauntering by,
And meets old crony-friend at near-by door;
Two of a kind! Both full of negro lore —
Though not in shreds but patches mixed galore.

A serious topic on, we think from tone —
The church, and churchyard opposite, perhaps —
Then with a nod, one slowly shambles on,
The other drops beside a tree and naps.

Then good Aunt Dinah, with her burdened head,
Carrying a pack about one-fourth her size —
Comes swinging down the road with steady tread,
Just sweet contentment beaming from her eyes.



Exciting day is this — an Auction on!

One feels there's something stirring in the air,
Which fact a small town-crier is making known
With bell, and placard pompously laid bare.

The jail — the church — the Court-house and hotel —
These fill the all-important corners four,
No warning — to "step lively" breaks the spell,
Just slow meandering by — and nothing more.

Thought of New England village fills the view,
No Broadway bustle this sweet quiet rends —
Old Ebony is gone — Aunt Dinah too —
The Auction over — and the morning ends.

LEAVING KNYSNA

Then on again — through forest lands — and near
To where — today — they search again for gold —
At Millwood, where bright nuggets doth appear,
And strengthen thought that more are there enrolled.

A splendid country! And fine motor ride —
But, taking this same section far — and large —
We're glad to come — if need be — here abide,
But gladder far to motor back to George.



LEAVING GEORGE FOR CAPE TOWN

Another day and night — and we are back
To where — in this long run — was starting point;
Through Afric's garden land — this winding track
Brings Cape Town's Table Mountain back to sight.

One little word however must be said
About the flora's lavish blooming here —
Past Mossel Bay — and so on — brightly clad!
Land of great promise this — green land of cheer.

We think no heath like this in all the world,
Heath that one finds at winsome Riversdale,
Rose-pink and waxy white, quite double furled,
Compared with these, all world-wide heath must pale.

A RETROSPECT

In summing up — we think we're well repaid,
Teeming with interest from the starting point —
But lest the tender traveller be dismayed —
We'd bid him well consider e'er the start.

Here distances, not noticeably long,
Consume much time in covering the ground,
Express trains run not every night and morn —
But three times weekly on the schedule found.



For miles the country sparsely built upon,
Both Veldt and clambering Karoo attest to that —
Broad plateau lands — where hours move slowly on,
In sight but springbok or a native hut.

Not all of travel is "*couleur de rose*";
Unless the pleasure far outweighs all else —
Unless one can accept what comes and goes —
'Tis best to seek sweet ease where hardship melts.

To those whom "Home, sweet Home," calls oft and loud,
Who claim and need old customs — we'd but say —
Home comforts are not always found abroad,
'Twere well — perhaps not far from home to stray.

To see the world — its peoples — and its creeds
Calls oft for patience — self-denial too!
We think it well repays! It fills our needs!
The ills o'erlooked. The pleasures held in view.

ALONG THE COAST AT CAMP'S BAY

Foaming and frolicking in from the sea
Curve the great waters in wild, sportive glee,
Tossing their waves amid laughter and roar,
A musical-dance on a white-sanded floor.

For the waves sing their own sweet songs all day
When the wind is fair — giving time for play,
'Tis just when the smiles of Æolus submerge
That they turn their sweet melody into a dirge.



Foaming and frolicking in from the sea,
Come with your melodies! Sing them to me!
Sing, merry songsters! I'll listen all day
To the sweet, whispered tales that you tell in the spray.

Love tales! Romances! Not heeding the roar,
I'll sit on the sands as I've done oft before —
Your symphonies sweet as they lap on the shore —
To those who can hear them, you'll sing evermore.

CAPE OF GOOD HOPE

But waves of the Oceans — what is it you say?
Are you bringing back word from the shore far away?
Profound, and so mighty your crashes at times,
Perchance 'twas in anger you left foreign climes.

There's a Bold Rock Convention of Oceans right here!
Renewal of friendship! A moment of cheer!
'Tis the meeting of waters from lands so remote —
To you both an old rendezvous! Cape of Good Hope.

Knowing well you were coming — but never to stay —
With a welcome — she watches you speed on your way,
And bids you the Flag of Good Hope keep unfurled
As you plough your way steadily over the world.

A talisman always in sunshine and calm,
In the hour of disaster — an unfailing charm!
On the crest of the waves may it freely be borne
By you both, and by one, at the distant Cape Horn.

* * * * *



Here deep to deep calls low in mystic tones
For greeting — silvery rippings of the waves, —
The goodbye given in low outgoing moans —
A meeting and a parting of the ways.

A GOODBYE TO SOUTH AFRICA

Again on board! Out on the rolling deep!
And Afric's shores receding from our sight,
Is it "goodbye" — we ask! If so, we'll keep
The vision clear e'en through the dreams of night.

'Tis well through memory we can live past hours,
And through that boon — we live as 'twere again,
Memory alone can bring back Afric's flowers —
And help us scent her hillside and her plain.

Her diamond lands! Her gold and copper fields!
Of Afric's wealth — who that can prophesy?
What may the future bring of hidden yields?
Just now asleep — to waken by and by.

Her wonderfalls! Greatest of plunges known!
Our own Niagara! Wondrous in her flow!
Though grand those waters, and of world renown!
To Falls of the Zambesi — we must bow.

Strange how one feels regarding unknown lands,
They, and their peoples little more than myths!
Go but among them! Mingle! And one finds —
How similar in all — the human vein exists.



Strangers were we — but now — in looking back —
Is realized pleasures great in wandering here;
Five thousand miles — the gauge — a 3-6 track —
The gain — of great South Africa — a fair idea.

We've traversed both Cape Province and Natal,
Teeming with interest wide — which brings to bear —
That with Rhodesia, Orange Free State and Transvaal —
All are well worthy of a sojourn here.

Thoughts of great pleasure ours! With one of pain —
Pleasure of carrying back such pictures true!
Who that can say — we'll ever come again?
Our spray of rosemary is mixed with rue.

And thus in going out — we rest the eye
On outstretched Table Mountain broadly spread,
As if to feast a multitude on high,
And guarded — to the right — by Lion's Head.

We look again to left — on Devil's Peak!
Like great, majestic barrier-wall, the three!
But these now fade — and leave but low, grey streak
As out from bay — we steam our way to sea.

THE FINAL RUN

On Union-Castle Line — the days glide by
So comfortably — one scarcely heeds their flight,
For long way out — the "white wings" round us fly,
"Companions de voyage" — for days in sight.



Not gulls alone — the albatross appears
In longer flight! A larger, hardier bird,
Whose great wings spread majestically through air
And seem by length of distance undisturbed.

Life on board ship is ever much the same —
Betting upon the run, and sundry games;
On South Atlantic — few, if any, sails —
Though spouting whales at times — reward the gaze.

The ship bells ring — we know 'tis rising time,
The sun well up — and Stewards at their post;
A “rubbing down” is on — the ship must shine,
No sun-up moment of the day is lost.

They ring again! The breakfast served we learn
And thus, on placid seas, or active swells,
Each hour — and half-hour, on, — from bow to stern,
Keep ringing, steadily and true, the good ship bells.

They give us hours — but as to days — not so!
That is an open question often times;
Today is ours! Like yesterdays will go,
But — “First day of the week” — one knows, and finds

Church Service on! We listen to the call!
A little band from every shore set free;
So sweet the music — with ship's rise and fall,
So beautiful this service on the sea.

Life on board ship! 'Tis bliss! Where else so free?
What of the world — its bustle and its cares?
Our home the ship! Our world the open sea!
Our watchers o'er the night — a million stars.



This life on board! A dream! An endless charm!

Where in such splendor drops the sun to sleep?
Like birds in flight — we're rolling on and on —
Our home — ourselves — afloat upon the deep.

'Tis but retracing now — Cape Verde we round —
Appearing on horizon — as in haze,
Four sister ships we pass — to Cape Town bound,
And thus, with golden weather glide the days.

Then morning breaks — with interest stirred anew —
A daylight passing of bold Teneriffe —
Whose peak presents 12,000 feet to view,
And rising straight from sea, great solid cliff.

So to Madeira — on — where hours we halt,
Then to Southampton Dock, we straightway steam;
'Tis but a ferry then — the crossing short —
The North Atlantic breaks our Summer's dream.

A modest ferry this — and traversed oft —
Between the dear Old World — and ours — the New;
The smile dies softly, as wells up the thought —
Vacation ends for Nineteen Twenty-Two.

Just one night more before the whirl begins —
One night to listen as each wavelet sings
Its lullaby. Sweet, lapping, soothing song
We'll hear once more, — and then — How long? How long?
We'll wait the time, these minstrels of the deep
Will lull us just as now — in happy sleep —
It may be near — that hour — it may be far —
We will not say goodbye — just "*au revoir*."

CHARLOTTE C. DAVENPORT.



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