

June 27, 1955
Monday Morning

Dearest Folks,

I seem to always write my letters out on the sunny porch in the morning, but this is the most pleasant time of day now that its winter and the outdoors is warmer than the house. The days are quite warm when the sun is out, but it is really cold every morning and every nite. I know I've said this before, but the temperature change is so great --we have now passed the shortest day of the year now so our days will start getting longer, ~~now~~.

Major is sitting by me sunning himself and Mickie is busy chasing birds, which she does all day long. The cat is asleep --it always sleeps ~~always~~ all day long and only comes around to be friendly when its supper time -- when all the animals eat -- once a day.

Peggy is standing by the card table trying to figure out how this works and nearly driving me mad with her poking and her prodding while I am trying to write. She thinks it is hilarious when she punches the Tab and the carriage goes flying across.

As Bob has written you we had a wonderful vacation. It was rather rushed, but not too much so except that we would have liked to have stayed every place much longer. The falls are all that has been said about them. They are simply breath taking ----so much water and spray that we could only comprehend their size by flying over them at a fairly low altitude. None of our picutres will really show they tremendous size. They say if you go there when the water is very low (in the Spring (Oct.) or at least before the rains that they are so low there is hardly any rainforest -- and very little spray so that you can see them -- and even take canoe trips out to an island on the edge ---would like to see them at that state, but doubt I'd have nerve to ride in a canoe. *that near the edge.*

We did take a launch trip about 5 or more miles up the river --- It was just beautiful -- we went to a little island and walked around and then had tea --- with monkeys coming down grabbing bits of cake out of your hand --- or behind your back. You can imagine how we had to hold on to Peggy and Jan in the boat -- always wanting to reach out and touch the water ----I will have nightmares for years over they falling into the river or into the waterfalls.

During the boat trip we saw two hippos and one crock. They say you usually see a lot of animals but the river was too full at this time. In places around the falls themselves the baboons will come and sit on your car, or if you are out walking around and have any package that looks like candy or other food you have to hold on tight or hide it as they will try to steal it from you. There is a small game reserve (only 30 acres) on the banks of the river where we went one afternoon. There was a Wildebeast and a Zebra in the road --- they just wouldn't get off the road, so we started around them very slowly -- all of a sudden the Zebra ran over to the car on Bob's side and put his whole head through the window with his mouth wide open and saliva dripping all over Bob's suit. We almost never got rid of him --- and presumed that he was begging for food. We later learned that he comes up to all cars like that begging for cigarettes. I remember that his teeth were stained and horrible, so guess that's why. He scared Jan and Peggy to death, though he was quite harmless, he was rather terrifying. Another curious visitor was the port hog. You know how ugly they are and in the Kruger Park are the shyest of animals. Well we were one and he looked quite tame so Bob got out his camera and propped it on the window to snap it when here came the hog so close that Bob couldn't get him in focus -- he also was on his hind legs trying to get a look at us ugly humans. We never got a ~~private~~ picture of him -- when Bob would back the car up to get away from him he would follow and jump up as soon as we stopped.

Back to the falls. The hotel we stayed in was the best we've found in Africa. The food was wonderful and we nearly ate ourselves sick and are both dieting like mad now. I weigh more than I have ever weighed -- 135 (except when pregnant) As you know tea is a british custom

and as all hotels work on the European plan here (all meals and 3 teas included in bill) we had tea whenever we happened to be in the hotel at tea time -- for morning tea they would bring scones (like sweet baking powder biscuits made with eggs) served cold ^{with jam} in the afternoon it was not uncommon for them to bring a plateful ~~of~~ of miniature sandwiches and several big pieces of layer cake.

We hiked ourselves to death there, not to mention what we put the children through as we didn't take Grace along. As I said, this place is terrifying as well as beautiful. There are no guard rails of any kind anywhere and one could just walk off into the chasm, or into the calm peaceful river above which just suddenly drops off into space. The spray can be seen for miles and the roar is deafening. I don't have any ~~an~~ idea how it compares to niagra -- I imagine one of the big differences is the lack of industrialization around Victoria Falls. There is one 3 foot pipe from which power is captured -- no doubt all the farms in the vicinity are without electricity (this isn't a fact - for I don't really know -- its just my guess) Livingstone is 7 miles away and is a tiny little town -- with a big wide main street. (Bulawayo (275 miles South is a big prosperous city). Also Salisbury to the North (I think its north) The falls except for the ~~bridge~~ bridge and camping grounds and occasional ~~wagon~~ signs "Beware of Wild Animals" must be the same as when Livingstone discovered them a hundred ^{years ago}. Speaking of the signs "Beware of Wild Animals" -- we thought instead they should have said "Beware of Falling In" etc. For the only wild animals we saw near the Falls were monkeys and Baboons ---- and the falls themselves seemed a lot more dangerous than the animals

We went into Livingstone to the museum --- they are having a centennial celebration of the falls discovery and have made a Livingstone museum collecting things far and wide from his relatives, other museums, etc. much of which will have to be returned to the original owners. It is a wonderful collection and so much more interesting all together than it would be if separated.

They also had a museum showing the development of man, as Africa is supposed to be the birth place of man-- It is a wonderful place -- we discovered one exhibit which was attributed to the discoveries of Professor Dart. Incidentally did you see the article mentioning him in Time again last week --- I think it was the one with Walter Ruether on it. Anyway last Monday under science. *The second time this year - the other being in Feb. I think.*

Galen came down yesterday to tell me he had had a letter from you Mother and how thrilled ~~into~~ he was to have those new stamps. He and his family are accompanying Prof. Dart on a n Anthropological expedition which will last for about 2 months -- it is also in connection I think with the Centennial year of Livingstone's discovery. They will visit bushmen caves, Zimbabwe, in yanga, the motopos, go all over northern rhodesia and on up into the congo. We are certainly envious of this trip as we would love to see more of Africa. Anyway Galen told me he'd like to get you some Congo stamps, etc. If ~~he~~ ^{he} does you must know that ~~his~~ ^{he} does this with his own pocket money. He gets a small allowance and is very tight with his money -- ~~His~~ ^{He} Mother says he only likes to spend it on stamps.

On our way to the Falls we visited the Motopos and saw the large granite hill where Cecil Rhodes and a few other famous S.Africans ^{and President} are buried. We also walked 2 miles to see a bushman cave which was very interesting ~~even~~ though kids were yelling.

Coming back home we spent the night at zimbabwe which was just fascinating. You will have to see our pictures of it to be impressed with it though.

Well, its time to go get Jan now, so will bring this to a close.