JUVENILE SKETCHES

NIAGARA FALLS & RIVER

Gertrude Thurman
July 15 1850

SKETCHES

OF

NIAGARA FALLS

AND

RIVER.

VIEW OF THE FALLS FROM PROSPECT POINT.

SKETCHES

OF

NIAGARA FALLS AND RIVER.

BY COUSIN GEORGE.

ILLUSTRATED WITH NUMEROUS ENGRAVINGS
AND CORRECT MAPS.

BUFFALO:
PUBLISHED BY WM. B. & CHAS. E. PECK.
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PREFACE.

When a Stranger seeks our acquaintance, we very naturally enquire who he is, and what he wants of us. Being anxious to be known to you through this little book, it is right that I should anticipate these questions. I do not disclose to you my true name. Authors have always enjoyed the privilege of concealing themselves under fictitious names; and I am sure you will not blame me for following so common, and so innocent an example. What I am, I ought perhaps to leave you to infer from the work I now present to you: but, I can not resist the temptation of telling you, that, though an elderly man, I have by no means forgotten the happy days of my childhood, when, with my brothers and sis-

ters,—now, alas, all gone from earth, or far separated from me,—I lived so merrily under the eyes of our now dead parents: and I have transferred my deep love for these dear lost ones, to those living strangers who most resemble them. Relationless as I am, I would claim at least a cousinship with all good and cheerful young folks: and I find my chief happiness in ministering to their innocent pleasures. Nothing would have reconciled me to driving away the children as I have had to do, while writing these Sketches, but the hope, amounting almost to belief, that, when finished, they would benefit as well as amuse, not only those noisy urchins who are now clamoring at my study door, but also very many little folks whom I shall never see.

If this book be so written as to please and profit you, it will do far more good than all the talking I can ever do: and I am very sure the subject of it is well adapted to the end in view. For the plates, without which the volume would lose, perhaps all its value, you are indebted to your friends William B. and Charles E. Peck, of Buffalo, who love to cater for you. In order to understand the text, you must imagine 'Cousin George' conversing with Charles and Lily, two of his

young cousins, as the three move in the scenes they talk about, and like a garrulous old fellow as he is, engrossing almost all the conversation. Charles and Lily are what Charles Lamb would call "Spirit Children," and you are at liberty to imagine them just such beings as you please: but it will be better, if my boy-cousins will think Charles just such an one as they, and my pretty girl-cousins imagine Lily as wearing their own form and features.

I find that I have not been able to compress in this book all the things I would like to tell you about the Niagara River, and the adjacent country. If you like what is here offered to you, and desire more, let the Pecks know it, and I will write other volumes for you, about the wars and wonderful events this Frontier has witnessed,—the history and traditions of the Indians, now so weak, but once so powerful,—the early settlement of this Country, and a thousand other matters I cannot now advert to.

But I have done, and am about to enjoy again the merry laugh and innocent sports of my own dear young ones; and I feel as happy, and as hopeful as a youngster who has just been loosed from school, in a sunny

day, as he bounds away to the play-ground. I leave my assumed name with my working coat in my study, and it depends entirely upon you whether I shall ever take it up again, and again appear before you, as your

COUSIN GEORGE.

Buffalo, March, 1846

SKETCHES

OF

NIAGARA FALLS AND RIVER.

CHAPTER I.

THE CATARACT AND ITS CONNECTION WITH OTHER WATERS. THE GREAT LAKES.

HERE we are in Buffalo, at last, my sprightly cousins! Well have you borne up under the fatigues of our long journey; but I am satisfied the rest you got last night, in this most comfortable Hotel, was right welcome to you both. How the rain pours down! I am sorry for it, for I would like to show you this rising town—the Queen City of the Lakes, as its inhabitants do love to term it. It is indeed a noble town; and its position, and the enterprize of its citizens, must make it a large city.

Get off the sofa, Charles, and tell me what I told you and Lily yesterday, about the Great Lakes! You have

forgot! And you too, Lily! Well, instead of dozing away the morning, draw your chairs up to the table, and look with me upon this map of our country; or rather study it. There is no way of getting knowledge without some labour, and if there were, it would not be worth the following. At any rate, what we do acquire with study and pains-taking, is always sweetest and most permanent. Even where a thing is told to us, we are very apt to forget it the minute after, as you did yesterday's lecture, unless we think about it, and turn it over in our minds, and so impress it upon our memories, and make it our own. But, to the map!

Here is Buffalo, at the eastern extremity of Lake Erie. Far in the North-west lies Lake Superior, the largest body of fresh water on the globe. In length it is about four hundred miles, and so surpasses the breadth of the state of New York. It is nearly one hundred miles longer than the rail-road we have just traversed from Albany. A short Strait, called the St. Mary's River, connects it with Lake Huron, which is two hundred and eighty miles in length, bends nearly South, and communicates through the St. Clair River, Lake St. Clair, and Detroit River, with Lake Erie,—the

scene of Perry's Victory, one of the greatest naval achievements of the last war. Lake Huron receives, through the Staits of Michilimackinac, the surplus waters of Lake Michigan, which is about three hundred and forty miles in length. Lake Erie bends somewhat northerly of east, for two hundred and seventy miles, and ends here, at Buffalo, in the Niagara River, which, after running for thirty-six miles a nearly north course, empties into Lake Ontario. That Lake is one hundred and ninety miles in length, and terminates in the River St. Lawrence, which you see, far in the North-east, expanding into the Gulf of the same name, which is but a broad arm of the Atlantic Ocean.

These great Lakes vary from forty to one hundred miles in breadth. The area of, or surface covered by the smallest of them, would suffice, were it dry land, for a large and populous State; and several German principalities, if they should be moved, like Aladdin's Palace, through the air, and dropped into it, would look like Islands, in Lake Superior.

All these Lakes are deep. Lake Erie, the average depth of which may perhaps be put at fifty feet, is the shallowest of the five. You have heard of the blue

Sea, and of the green Sea. The Ocean is green in some places and blue in others; and its variations of color depend entirely upon its depth. The Sailors say they are in soundings when the water is shoal enough for anchoring; and in soundings, the Sea is always green: But, where it is unfathomable,—that is, so deep that we cannot measure it,—it is of an extremely dark blue color, approaching black. There is a great deal of blue water upon all the Lakes, except Lake Erie.

The Rivers connecting the Lakes are rapid, but deep and navigable. Like the Lakes, they are cool and chrystalline, and abound in large and excellent fishes, one of which Lily liked so well at breakfast. No monster, nor venomous thing has ever been found in any of these waters. The Lakes have no tides: but many people, who claim to have observed the fact, maintain that they rise constantly for a certain number of years, and then fall gradually for as many more, and so keep regularly rising and falling.

And so, Master Charles, you think it is a pity that so much valuable land is covered up by water! And you, Miss Lily, must chime in with your wise brother, by asking what the uses are of these great barren Lakes

and Rivers. particularly as they produce neither gold fishes, pearl oysters, nor mermaids! I'll not call you silly, my dear cousins, nor scold you! If the truth were known, it would perhaps be plain that we are all just as foolish, and not near so candid as you little ones. We are all prone to find fault, and think that things are not made exactly right. But the older we grow, and the more we observe, and the deeper we enquire into the reason of things, the better satisfied we become, that. when we complain of nature as it is, we are no wiser than the very little boy who wished the world was made of sugar candy. Our Maker is infinitely wise and good; but, it is very clear that he did not intend us to be perfectly happy in this world, and so has framed it accordingly; but it is equally clear, that there is a great deal of pure enjoyment provided for every one who will accept it: and I know no greater source of pleasure,—always excepting doing good,—than reverently examining the works of God, whether they be living or dead. But, as you grow older, you will understand these things better; and, I trust, come to the true conclusion, that everything is good. Everything is well in its place and time; and I doubt not but

that the deserts of Barca and Sahara answer important ends in the economy of the world. But, however this may be, a great deal of good exists in and springs out of our glorious chain of gleaming Lakes, some part of which I'll mention.

In the first place, they abound with fishes; some of which are lovely in their scaly armour, and graceful in their varied forms and pleasing motions, and almost all of which are excellent food for man. These beings, roaming freely in their native element, and plentifully supplied with all their natures crave, cannot but be happy. Besides, a great many men, particularly on the Upper, or more Western Lakes, are engaged in catching them, and salting them down in barrels, and carrying them to different places, where they are sold. The value of these rich fisheries is rapidely increasing. They support in comfort very many families.

These Lakes and Rivers are very useful, because they are navigable for nearly the whole length of the chain, and so enable people to move about from one place to another, and carry goods of different kinds to and fro, and to exchange them, much more quickly, cheaply, and safely than they would otherwise be able

to do. You will realize their great utility in these respects, if you will but think a little. You remember in coming from Albany, how many busy cities and pretty villages our steam cars drew us through—how populous, fertile, and beautiful seemed the whole teeming land! Now Master Charles, I ask you, how long you think this portion of our country has been settled by the whites? No, my good fellow! not quite so long as Connecticut! I know some few people who can remember when there were not twenty white persons west of Canandaigua. Indeed, sixty-six years ago, the whole country west of Utica was one vast forest, except where the lazy Indian had chopped down the trees, and cleared a few acres here and there, to raise a little Indian corn or maize, and plant an apple orchard. It would have taken centuries to work this great change, had it not been hastened by the Erie Canal. That enabled people to come into the country, and bring everything they wished with them, and to send to the East whatever they raised from their land more than they needed, and to receive instead, comforts, and necessaries, and luxuries the soil could not produce. And so it is with the great Lakes and their connecting Rivers.

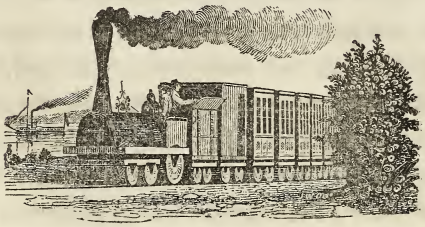
They are all navigable, with the exceptions I am about to mention, and have therefore drawn to and fixed upon their shores a happy and industrious population. The very largest Ship or Steamboat can be navigated from the western to the eastern end of Lake Superior, where the Sault de Ste. Marie, a fall of a few feet, or rather a strong Rapid, would stay her further progress. Our General Government will probably avoid this obstacle, in a few years, by digging a Ship Canal around it, and then our Ship will be able to continue her voyage through Lake Huron, into Lake Michigan, or down the St. Clair, through Lake Erie, and along the Niagara River to within two miles of the Falls. At Lewiston, seven miles below, navigation again commences, and, with the exception of some Rapids in the St. Lawrence, continues uninterrupted to the Sea. But our Canadian neighbours have constructed the Welland Canal around the Falls, and will soon conquer the obstacles in the St. Lawrence. Indeed, it will not be too much to say, Cousin Charles! that, some ten years hence, you may be carried in a Steamboat, all the way from Quebec, or Buffalo, to find, or perhaps assist in founding a proud City, on the shores of Lake Superior, where

naught but fishermen and hunters, and a few miners, as yet resort.

These vast bodies of water, like the Ocean, serve also to mitigate the winter's cold, and to abate the heats of summer, in the adjacent countries; and like it too, they act as reservoirs, in which water is collected, to be drawn up into the atmosphere by the air and sun, and returned to the earth again, in refreshing rains, or to be spread over it in the form of snow, like a protecting mantle: and thus they replenish the living springs and running streams, and make the whole land fruitful. Perhaps, if the great Lakes were dried up, the northern tributaries of the Ohio River, and of the Upper Mississippi, would be shrivelled up, and the whole country between these Rivers and the waters of Hudson's Bay, be parched and burnt into a desert. However this may be, we know that the States bordering on these Lakes are eminently healthful and fertile; and it is but reasonable to conclude, that these happy results are in some way produced by them.

And now, Cousin Lily, please pinch Charley's ear—not too hard, however,—and so wake the rogue up!

The clouds are breaking away, the Sun will soon burst forth in all his glory, and we'll be off to the Falls in the afternoon train.



CHAPTER II.

BUFFALO — NIAGARA RIVER — THE GREAT LAKES — THEIR SITUATION — RIVER ABOVE THE FALLS AND BELOW IT — GRAND ISLAND.

We are taking a lesson in patience, Cousins! The rain comes down again in torrents. I am sorry for it, for I had hoped to show you somewhat of Buffalo. But this is hopeless now. A city in a soaking rain, like a pretty girl just risen from a puddle, shows not to advantage. You may deny my good nature, if you please, Miss Lil! but I'd not stir out of doors an inch, in such foul weather, to win your smile. Tramping through wet streets, with two young cousins, and but one umbrella, in such a pouring day, would be anything but comfortable for me or you. Let us see if we cannot find some better employment to while away the time!

More than thirty thousand people live in Buffalo. Most of them thrive, and there are but few very poor

folks in it. Twenty years ago it was but a small village. There are many fine buildings in it, and every year adds to their number. It is a beautiful city, especially when viewed from the Lake, or the opposite Canadian coast.

BUFFALO FROM ABOVE FORT ERIE, U. C.

Come Charles, tell us, if you please, the names of some of the principal Rivers in the world! My conscience, what a clatter! You have rattled off fifty in a breath, and yet leave out one of the most remarkable—our own Niagara! Those you have mentioned, are indeed noble, and celebrated streams; but, I cannot consent that the Niagara should yield the palm to any

of them. Some, indeed, like the Amazon, the La Plata, and the Mississippi, roll larger floods towards the Ocean :—Others, as the Jordan, the Tiber, and the Nile, are rendered sacred or famous, by the great events which they have witnessed :—Others, like the Seine, the Hudson, and the Thames, reflect the forms of mighty cities on their banks :—Others, like the Pactolus, and many rivers of mountain birth, bring from the hills, and scatter in their course sands sprinkled with gold, and interspersed with gems : And yet our own swift and strong Niagara may well bide a comparison with the proudest and loveliest of them all.

Nay, Lily! you need not shake your little head so saucily,—as though you thought me over-bold in passing upon things I never saw. Are you not in the same predicament, when you pronounce the foreign rivers superior to our own? We are apt to undervalue what is familiar, and to over-prize the distant, particularly if it chances to be named in history. It seems impossible that the stream which flows by our very door, and which we so admire, should equal the yellow Tiber, so celebrated in the story of the world. And yet Niagara could swallow a dozen rivers like the Tiber,

and scarcely be increased in size. Here is a map of our River in Peck's Tourist's Companion. It runs northerly about twenty-two miles to the Falls;—thence seven miles to Lewiston; and thence as many more to Lake Ontario. The upper portion of it is very different from that below the Falls. Turn to the map of the United States, and here, in the West, you find a tract of country abounding in little lakes and streams, which not unfrequently do interlock, though they run different ways. Though their sources are very near each other, and sometimes they flow from the same limpid lake or long and dreary marsh, these rivulets part widely:—Some rush to the north, and disembogue among the all but eternal ice of Hudson's Bay;—others are the head waters of the Mississippi, and, after a varied course of more than two thousand miles, empty into the Gulf of Mexico;—and others still, flow to the east, and fall into Lake Superior. The difference in elevation above the sea, between that Lake and Erie, is by no means great; and they, and the intermediate Lakes, Michigan, Huron, and St. Clair, and the Straits and Rivers that join them, may be considered as occupying very large bottoms and channels, sunk in an im-

mense plain. This plain, being quite elevated above the Ocean, is frequently, but not properly, called a Mountain-Plain. The surplus waters of the Lakes, flowing through the Niagara River, leap boldly from it at the Falls, and so escape to a much lower level. But, this mountain-plain continues beyond the Falls, and the the River below, instead of gliding as before, in a shallow trench upon the surface, is now sunk deep into its rocky bosom, and confined, for several miles, in a narrow channel, through which it forces its way with difficulty towards Lake Ontario.

The river above the falls is from one to three miles broad, and its channel is from twenty to thirty feet in depth. It is too strong and rapid to be frozen over, even in the severe winter of our latitude. Not being subject to the moon's influence, it has no tides, and preserves a nearly unvarying height, except in strong storms of wind, which sometimes raise or lower it a few feet, by increasing or diminishing the water at the eastern end of Lake Erie. Its banks, therefore, are almost invariably neat and clean quite to the water's edge, and it never presents those stripes of black and offensive mud on its margin, which, at low

water, detract so much from the beauty of the rivers of the seaboard. Certainly it is, with its grassy, or well wooded shores, one of the loveliest of our streams; while its strong, broad, and unfailing waters, moving as they do, so ceaselessly, impart to it a solemn grandeur, like that of the vast Ocean.

You have read, Charles, how the ancients, being ignorant of the true God, made unto themselves Deities, and imagined them existing almost everywhere,—"in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath, and in the waters under the earth." You remember, too, that they attributed a divinity to every stream; and some of these river Deities were males, and some females, according to the quality of their respective streams. The clear, and gentle, and fertilizing brook, was generally the habitation of some fair water-nymph; but a rough God, crowned with rushes, ruled over the turbid torrent and stately river. If cousin George be any judge of such matters, the mixed character of the Niagara would have troubled these old God-makers; for it would have demanded an union of grace and beauty more than masculine, and of force and dignity more than feminine, as a true symbol of its

varied qualities. What would they have done, think you, my wise cousins? Lily is perhaps right. They would have married a very strong and terrible god to the most graceful and loveliest of the nymphs, and given the Niagara to the married couple for their setting out in the world.

Yes, Charles, this river is connected with many memorable events. It has witnessed some strange adventures and heroic feats, the telling of which would make your blood bound, or melt you both to tears. Its waters have often been stained with human blood; and its forests have witnessed the sufferings, and been hallowed by the prayers of pious Missionaries, who took their lives in their hands, and came here into a howling wilderness, to save the souls of the red Indians, who shared it with the bear and wolf less than two hundred years ago. But these are matters we may talk of hereafter.

There are many islands in this great river; but all of them are small and unimportant, except those we shall see or visit at the Falls, and Grand and Navy Islands, which you observe here on the map. Grand Island, as you see upon the map, is very large, and

but a small portion of it is cultivated. The rest is wild as nature made it. Upon it, the wild turkey is sometimes found. It is blacker and somewhat bigger than the tame one, Charles. There are many deers in the dark woods, and hunters sometimes go there to chase them with deep-mouthed hounds. Psha! Lily. You know well enough that only the stags have horns, and that the does have none. You cannot imagine how beautiful their young, the little spotted fawns, look in the woods. No, Miss Lily; there are no fairies there, but there are as fit places for them on Grand Island, as can be found in England, or any part of Europe, and when we visit it, I'll fancy one in you. But there are there some scattered wolves, and many cunning foxes. The latter will steal chickens:—The former, though they do slaughter now and then a sheep, have always spared the little Red Riding Hoods of the Island; so you may safely visit it, though you do sometimes pester your old cousin with saucy questions.

But it is almost dinner time and the sun is shining warm and clear. Run and pack up, Lil; and you, Master Charles, go pay our bill. We'll to the Falls to-day!

CHAPTER III.

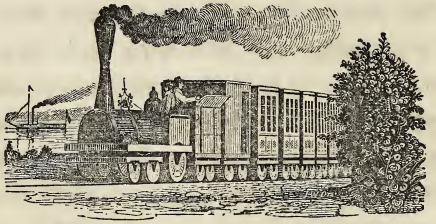
JOURNEY TO THE FALLS — RAILROADS AND STAGES — THE FORT — FORT ERIE — NIAGARA RIVER — THE SAIL BOAT — TONAWANDA — SCHLOSSER LANDING.

This rail-road traveling is certainly very pleasant; — particularly to elderly people like myself, who have a lively recollection of the annoyances of journeying by land some ten or fifteen years ago. In those days we were carried in stage-coaches, drawn by four horses, whose utmost speed seldom exceeded six miles in the hour. In these coaches, where four full-grown persons would have been but ill at ease, for lack of room, nine were frequently crowded. O, it was trying! Such squeezing, and interfering of feet, and rubbing one's knees against the middle seat, till they were black and blue! — and then the jerking, and jolting — the sense that you could not be comfortable, or rather that you could not lessen your own discom-

fort, without increasing the suffering of some fellow passenger—the impossibility, in the closely-wedged mass, of moving your hand to your own pocket, without thrusting your elbow into your neighbor's side—the closeness,—the heat,—the dust!—And, when the roads were soaked with rain, how deep the mud—how desolate the dripping landscape—how discouraging to the impatient traveler, the slow walk of the smoking horses, as, with frequent stops, they dragged along the coach, heavy with sullen passengers! And, worst of all, the tedious delays springing from failing harness, lost linchpins, and broken axle-trees—the terror and danger caused by fractious, vicious horses, who would refuse to go, or try to run away, and seemed to have a particular desire to carry the stage into the ditch, or down some steep precipice;—and the miserable labor of standing, knee-deep in the mire, with rails borrowed from a neighboring fence, striving to prize the coach out of some mud-hole, where it had stuck fast beyond the horses' power to draw it out! You would not laugh, master Charles! if you had but a little of my experience;—if, like me, you had in winter, in the dark, cold night, been compelled to leave the sleigh,

and clamber over snow-wreaths, and join in beating and trampling in the drifted snow, a path for the tired horses—or been overset, with big, fat men, almost as large as Daniel Lambert, rolled upon you—and been in peril from broken bridges, stumbling horses and drunken drivers, as I have oft-times been in the old stage time. These things may seem trifling to young bloods like you, as they were, perhaps, in fact, to me, when I was young: But, in looking back upon them, it appears wonderful to me, how human flesh and blood could undergo all I have suffered in the old post-coaches. How different now! Here am I in a large and handsome room, sitting in a comfortable, cushioned chair,—as the French say, *vis-a-vis*, or face to face, with my pretty cousin—and the gentlemen and ladies, and the children all around us, wear looks as happy as a holiday. Some are reading, some are chatting, and some are looking out upon the lovely scenery through which we glide, with a most easy motion, at the rate of twenty miles an hour. Now, Lily! help us, from your fairy reading, with some comparison for this enchanting mode of travelling. Thank you, dear, for your ready answer! We do move so easily and

swiftly, and carry with us so much of home-comfort, that we may well imagine this car to be a flying palace, or rich house, carried by kindly Genii through the air, or unwillingly transported by a panting, howling Afrite! What a shrill shriek the engine gave then, as though to aid the fancy!



But we are mounting the bluff, and here on our left, you see Lake Erie stretching its shining waters to the west. This stone building, with a fanciful tower, is not a castle, saucy Lil! It was not erected by Blunderbore, or Giant Grim, or any of those cruel monsters who ate pies made of boys and girls, instead of chickens; and married ladies against their will. On the contrary, it was built for his own residence by a

gentleman of refined taste, and a true lover of all mankind, including young folks. It is now owned by the United States, and is, or will be, the head quarters of the officer who will command the Fort you see beyond it. The Fort looks down upon the lake and river, and is so placed as, with its cannon, to defend the entrance of the Buffalo Harbor, and also to control the navigation of the river. That long, black cloud which hangs in the air, is the smoke of a huge steamboat, so far away upon the lake, that it is all invisible. How beautiful is the glittering bay, with the fleet of schooners and ships dotting its surface with their snowy sails!

But, whew!—the scene is left behind in an instant,—and we look down upon the noble Niagara, which here rushes from Lake Erie towards the north. Your eyes, sweet Lil! are as keen as they are bright, to catch so quickly those dark-gray ruins on the Canadian coast. Those shattered walls are the poor remnants of Fort Erie, so famous in the history of the last war. There are saddening stories of battle and of death connected with it—some of which I'll tell you hereafter, if you wish.

But, we out-run the river ;—and that swallow—the swiftest of the birds—with his utmost effort, scarce passes us, as we roll along. The village we have just left behind, is Black-Rock, famous in our border story ; and the dull stream we are now crossing is the Konjockety Creek, where a fierce battle was fought and won by the Americans in the last war—may it always be the last !—This I'll describe to you, when we have leisure. The low Island in the River, between which and the shore is drawn a dam, to form a harbor, is Squaw Island,—and this straggling hamlet is Black-Rock Dam.

How wide and beautiful is the Niagara on our left ! What say you, Charles ?—That it is a fit boundary for a great nation ? You are right, my cousin, though somewhat poetical. And yet it is easily crossed. May it never be crossed again, except for purposes of trade and kindly intercourse !

Don't be frightened, Lily !—there's no danger, I assure you. The people in that little boat are as safe as we are here. How she bounds and dances over the waves, and glances athwart them like a bird !—Now

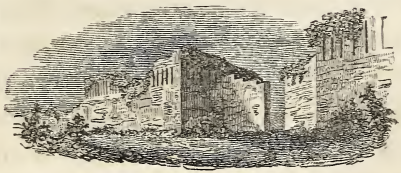
we leave the River,—and soon will enter the beautiful woods.

Here we are on the Bridge at the Tonawanda, eleven miles from Buffalo.—Eleven miles more will soon be passed, and we be at the Falls. Let's get out upon the Bridge, while our old steam-horse is drinking his fill of water. The low dam above is pretty! See that fellow in the boat—how he hauls up the fishes!—perch, I presume. The village, as you see, is nothing yet; but, it will be, ere many years, a handsome town.—There's the bell! Scamper, cousins, or we'll be left. Take care of yourself, Charles! Give us your hand, Lil, and run! Take that gentleman's hand, and let him lift you on the platform. Thank you, Sir! Here we are, all safe. Upon my word, we were nearly left, and I have run myself out of breath,—and all because

you, Miss Lily, would insist upon stopping to pacify that dirty child, who was squalling, for nothing, I'll be bound. You could not help it, you say. Well, I must forgive and make up with you. You are your dear mother over again. Look out, you pert minx, or I'll try very hard to be angry yet! How dare you say that I am not angry; and try to flatter me by comparing me to your silly father, who always scolds with a smile on his face! I am very angry, I assure you,—and, to prove it, I wont say another word to you—until I have finished reading this chapter of my Tourist's Companion.

We are now but three miles from the Falls. That lonely and humble tavern has seen strange deeds. That old warehouse on the water's edge, but a short distance from the tavern, is commonly known as the Schlosser Landing. By it the Steamboat Caroline was moored, when she was cut out, and set on fire, and sent over the Falls, in 1837, by English troops. Yes, Charles, we were at peace then with Great Britain. But, there had been troubles in Canada, and what was called the Patriot Excitement raged on our frontier. The story however is too long to tell at present. Right opposite

you see Navy Island, which has much to do with this exciting tale. I'll tell you all I know about it, cousins, when we find fitting time and place. There you see the commencement of the rapids, or broken water, above the Falls:—now they are concealed by the grove we've entered,—and, in a minute, we'll be at our long wished-for journey's end.



RUINS OF FORT ERIE, U. C.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CATARACT HOTEL — SIGHTS, SOUNDS, AND EARTH-TREMBLINGS — MORNING RAMBLE — THE AMERICAN FALL — THE BRIDGE — RED JACKET.

Good morning to your night-cap, Miss Lily! How did you rest last night? As well, I hope, as Master Charles, here, who did not stir from the time he tumbled into bed, until ten minutes since, when I awoke him. You were frightened, you say! Why, what at, or what by? I thought you were a brave girl; and there's nothing frightful here that I can imagine. There is no place in the world more quiet and orderly, than this sweet little village;—and the only bad folks in it, have always been, like ourselves, but transient visitors. What can have frightened you?

Lily. I am not very easily frightened, Cousin George! And perhaps I used the wrong word when I said I was. I felt as I suppose you would feel, if something was go-

ing on which you could not understand, nor trace to any body, but by which you did not expect to be immediately injured. I felt a sort of awe creep over me. You know that you would not let us go out yesterday, on account of the shower which came up just after our arrival. So I retired early, and, being quite fatigued, was soon asleep. I had slept perhaps two or three hours, when I awoke. Every thing was still, in the house. I was first sensible of a low, deep, continued sound, very much like that of the sea-surf on Rockaway Beach. That I presumed was the noise of the great Falls ; and it was so lulling, that I would soon have been asleep again, had I not heard my window shaken, as I supposed. I raised my head, and as the moon was shining into my room, saw that there was no one at the window. But the shaking continued. I thought then there was some wind : but, on getting up, I found it was a clear, calm night ; and yet the window-sash still rattled in the casement, as though there was a storm ; and I felt that the whole house trembled.

Charles. I can tell you, Lily, what it was! It was, undoubtedly, a slight shock of an earthquake. It was probably much severer farther south. Very likely it

has destroyed some of the West India Islands, and has made itself only slightly felt so far north. I would not have been alarmed, I know; for I would have thought of an earthquake at once.

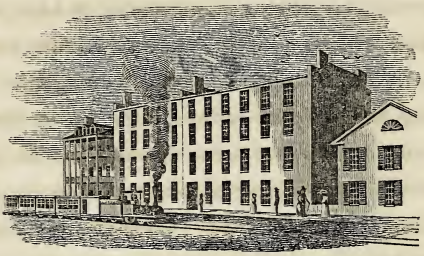
Lily. But, Charles! this was not an earthquake. I did think at first it might be; but it continued constantly for a very long while, without increasing or decreasing. Besides, it was gentle, and not sudden and violent. I felt sure that an earthquake would not last so long, and would be more violent. I soon lost all apprehension, and went back to bed: and the gentle rattling, and the slight tremulousness of the house, were very far from keeping me awake. I believe indeed, that, with the roaring of the Falls, they put me asleep again. When I awoke in the morning, people were astir, and I heard carriages in the street. The house was firm and solid, and the windows were silent, as windows should be.

Charles. All this only shows that it was an earthquake. If it was not, why don't this shocking trembling that you talk about, continue? It was probably very severe very far off.

Well, cousins! Lily is right in saying it was not an earthquake; but she is mistaken in thinking it has ceased. As for you, Cousin Charles! you would be in the wrong, even if it were an earthquake, in being so positive. This trembling of the land about this neighborborhood, has alarmed many people before now. That it actually exists, there is no doubt; nor is there any doubt but that it is produced by the immense mass of water which is continually falling and beating upon the earth below the Falls. You perceive this tremulous motion only in the perfect calm of a still night. When other objects distract the attention, or other noises are blended with the slight ones it produces, it is lost to our senses. If you will examine your casement very atten tively, you will discover that it still trembles.

But now for a ramble before breakfast—"to brush with early steps the morning dew." Confound the dew, say I! Wet feet and soiled stockings, may be poetical, but they are not to my taste; and I trust, Cousin Lily, that you will follow the beaten path, and not sacrifice comfort and neatness to poetry this morning. Put on thick shoes, and a warm shawl, like a good sensible lady of twelve years old, and we'll be off. And, Master

Charles, please take a good look at our Hotel, so that we may be sure to find it on our return.



We'll go on the main street towards the rail-road, and turn down the first cross-street, by the old Eagle Tavern. This would take us to the Bridge : but, after passing the Old Curiosity Shop, where everything beautiful is exposed for sale, we'll turn to the right, and ramble through the grove straight to the American Fall.

We'll enter this long wooden building. In it commence the American stairs, leading to the water's edge below the Fall. The rock has been blasted down for many feet, so as to make a deep and narrow trench in the precipice,—and in this trench the steps are placed. You see them descending in a long straight flight, to a

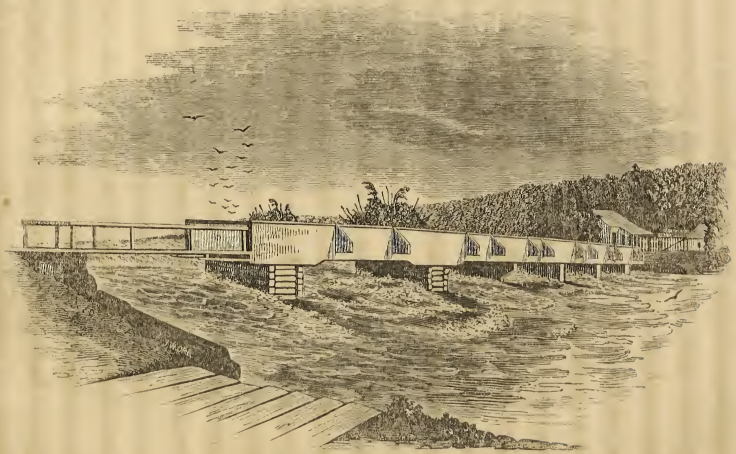
small platform. This opens on a path which leads to the water. On their left a railway, laid by their side, slopes to the river, two hundred feet below. I do not wonder that you shrink back from the edge with apprehension. It is a fearful height to those who have always lived in a level country. This railway is used for hauling up and letting down baggage to the Ferry, which crosses the River below the Falls. These stairs are new. The old were built along the edge of the precipice, and clung to its side, and were far more picturesque, but not nearly so commodious. There, on the wall, you see a picture of the view from Prospect Point, embracing the entrance to and top of the old stair-case. Let's step upon tbe bank, and compare this picture with the actual view.

Here, at our feet, yawns a chasm more than two hundred feet in depth ; bounded on both sides by perpendicular walls of rock, whose feet are laved by a rushing, troubled river. This river is divided into three branches by two small islands, and leaps from over head into this chasm, in three distinct channels—one small, and two immense ones. At our feet rushes the American branch of the Niagara, broad and foaming,

and having a small portion of itself cut off by Prospect Island,—that little Island, covered with cedars, which seem to tremble upon the verge of the cliff. The inconsiderable fall between it and Iris Island, whose end divides the river into two great parts, is sometimes called the Central Fall. Between Iris Island and the Canadian shore, is the British, or Horse-shoe Fall. Yonder is Terrapin Tower.

The gentle air and newly-risen sun, have already drunk up the rain-drops, and the sward is dry and soft. Let's lie down upon it, and gaze at ease. Could words ever picture this, Charles? Never! nor painting either: For painting cannot give life nor motion;—its life is in the dull imagination of the beholder;—it cannot imitate the rush of the wild waters, nor give to us a sense of the vastness of such a scene as this. And as for poetry, my Lily!—it's utmost strength is weakness, compared with what's before us.

But let us stroll up the bank of the River! Here, on the margin of the stream, is a platform extending several feet over the brink of the Fall. It is railed in, and secured by heavy stones, to the bed of the River. It is safely anchored; but I will not urge you to follow me



BRIDGE TO BATH ISLAND.

upon it. There is something frightful in the notion of being suspended in the air so high, upon a single plank. But come here, within a few feet of the verge, and look down awhile. I ask you to do it, for your own good. You must accustom yourself to look into this abyss, with an undizzying eye, or you will lose much of the pleasure of our visit here.

This is scarcely a third-part of the River—this American channel—and yet it is a noble stream. How pleasant are its banks!—how fresh and odorous the air that plays upon them! Keep out of that water, Miss Lily! You've got thick shoes on, have you? Yes! but fishermen's boots, my dear, will hardly keep your feet dry, if you will wade in a stream a foot deep. And Master Charles! I see you are wet to the shoulders in pulling stones from the bottom of the brook. You're children, after all; and the sooner we get back, the better. So, hurry along! But, wet as you are, we'll stop a minute here to look at the Bridge to Bath Island. As a Bridge, it is nothing extraordinary, as you see: but the wonder is, how it could be built in such a raging river as it crosses. I have been told that Red Jacket was present while they were building this bridge, and watched the

process with most attentive eyes. He was perhaps as great a man as ever flourished among our Indians—a mighty orator—and possessed of great influence with his people. He disliked the white men, and desired the red men to retain their pagan creed and barbarous customs. When he saw how readily the white men took advantage of every little eddy in laying the foundations of the bridge, and that a few of them effected what all his tribe could not have done,—he, it is said, forgot the coldness of his nature, and uttered some praises of the white man's skill.

But, here we'll mount the hill, and hasten home. To your rooms, my cousins, and dress for breakfast, and meet me in the drawing-room.

CHAPTER V.

THE FALLS CONTINUED—FIRST IMPRESSIONS—FURTHER DESCRIPTION OF THEM—LOCKPORT MINERALS—INDIAN WORK—CANES—BATH ISLAND—HOG'S BACK—PROSPECT ISLAND—THE THREE PROFILES.

I am not surprised, my dear Cousins, at your disappointment with the Falls: But, I am delighted with your candor in admitting, that, as yet, you have not experienced the wonder with which you thought they'd fill you. Most people, if they'd confess the truth, I think would say, that, at the first view, the Falls were not so grand, as, from description, they had imagined them. To be correctly appreciated, they must be viewed from many points, and also close at hand, and thought about. We will stay here some days; and you will leave this place, I am most confident, with very different notions of this great wonder of the world; —and I doubt not, will innocently exaggerate its details,

as did its earliest visitors. Father Hennepin, a Roman Catholic priest, visited the Falls, in 1678, and gave the first description of them to the world, in which he puts their height at six hundred feet. La Hontan, another Frenchman, some years after, estimated it at nearly eight hundred. Their true altitude is about one hundred and sixty feet. I do not suppose that either of these authors were guilty of wilful fibbing. They had no means of measuring the Falls, and so, ascribed to them a height proportioned to the effect they produced upon themselves. The error perhaps consisted in their attributing their sublimity to a wrong particular. Father Hennepin, for instance, was a great traveller, and probably had seen other cataracts as high as this, but far inferior in the impression they made upon him: Thence he might reason thus—If the others, being falls of nearly two hundred feet, did not strike me with awe—this Niagara, which so astounds me, must be thrice as lofty. In our Cataract, it is not water pouring from the clouds, that makes its strong impressions,—but the unfailing falling of a tremendous volume of water from a great height,—the clouds of spray, a

shaking earth, the rocks, the rainbows, and a hundred things combined.

Look at this little map and you will see at once the position of these Falls. There is Prospect Point where we stood this morning; and looking, as we then did southerly, or towards the top of the map, we see the American Fall, Prospect Island, the Central Fall, Iris Island, and the Horse Shoe Fall extending from Iris Island to Table Rock on the Canadian shore. A little to the left is the bridge we talked about, leading to Bath Island, and from thence to Iris Island. And this dark and blurred portion of the map, represents the channel of the river, sunk deep into the rock below the Falls. Here is the Ferry, marked by a faint line crossing the river from the American Stair-case, and ending in a road, which winds up the precipice, and leads to the Clifton House, a most excellent Hotel. Study this chart awhile my Cousins, and then we'll walk again.

So you've stolen a march upon me, and been through the village, without your cousin! But, I'll forgive you, as you refrained from crossing the Bridge without me. And you've been spending much money, I see, for

what, to you at least, is worth far more than what you parted with. Let's look at your purchases!

A pair of tiny moccasins, gay with glass beads of various colors! The Falls are famous for the beauty and variety of this kind of work here to be found. It is called Indian work, and is supposed to be done entirely by Squaws, some of whom live hereabouts. These things are manufactured principally by Indians, but are not, I think, in Indian taste:—*That* ornaments the moccasin, and hunting pouch, with figures worked in porcupine quills, and stained of different hues. You may rely upon it, Miss Lily, that your favorite princess, the tawny Pocahontas, when she darted forward to save brave Captain Smith, had no such things as these upon her graceful form.

Fiddle-faddle, Master Charles! I know too much of mineralogy, to be astonished at these beauteous spars. They seem like old acquaintances; and I think I can tell you as much or more about them, than can the man who sold them to you. They came from Lockport, where the Canal ascends the mountain ridge and is cut, like a deep trench, for several miles, through solid limestone rock, abounding in geodes, or hollows,

lined with sparkling minerals. The stones, blasted with gunpowder, from the rock, are piled on each side of the Canal in huge heaps; and there you can, at any time, procure as good specimens as these. This mineral, which is transparent as glass, and parts so easily into thin plates, is Selenite,—a variety of Gypsum, or, as its coarser varieties are termed, Plaster of Paris. Plaster is a very useful manure on some soils; and from it are made those coarse busts and images, which you have seen carried about the streets for sale, on boards. It is very soft—so soft that you can scratch it with your finger nail.

These small hard crystals of various shades of red and brown, are blende,—a compound of Sulphur and Zinc. You need not look so close, my Cousin! You'll not discover either; for the two united into one are neither. Certainly, they do not look as though they did contain Zinc or any other metal; but they do, a large proportion. I show this to you as an example of the great truth,—that, as a general thing, Nature offers us the metals, not in their purity, but in disguise,—combined with other things, from which labor and skill must separate them.

These lemon colored crystals, projecting from this stone, are dog-tooth-spar, so called from their being shaped like canine teeth;—and these small, convex cubes, among them, shining like the inside of a sea shell, are pearl-spar: Both, are of the same substance, as the dull rock they beautify. How wonderful is Nature! How she varies her materials, and frames from the same matter the most opposite appearances.

Your cane, Charles, I see is bent at the end like a Shepherd's crook. Almost all the canes you'll find here for sale, are bent the same way. No! they do not grow so; and I see you are troubled to find a way, by which a straight stick of that thickness, could be so bent without breaking. Mere force can not do it. The mode is this:—The ends of the straight Canes are exposed to steam until they are softened, so as to permit their being gradually curved into a crook.

But we must not lose this precious summer morning. We'll walk to the Island forthwith.

How the Bridge shakes! The water shoots under it like an arrow, and strikes the abutments with successive shocks. How beautiful are those two little

Isles above us! They are so quiet; and their cedars make them look like fairy vessels gliding securely among the rapids. One might gaze all day untired, at this strong river, dashing down towards us from ledge to ledge, as though it meant to carry everything before it. But, amid the thunder of its waters, it is impossible to talk. Let's take a run across the Bridge to Bath Island. Dont run through the gate, however, though it is open. Here, for a small toll, we are made free of the Island during our visit; and we'll pay it most cheerfully. These petty contributions maintain the Bridge, and many other things, for the convenience of visiters of Iris Island. Write our names in the book Miss Lily, in your neatest hand! They may serve, years hence, to recall happy recollections of our sojourn here.

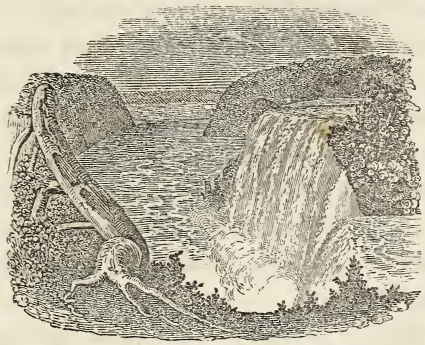
That building is a Paper Mill. "No Admittance," on its door, is useless, so far as I'm concerned; for I've never had a thought of entering it: But now, I'd like to show my Cousins, how "filthy rags" are metamorphosed into pure, white paper.

This short bridge passed, and we're on Iris Island. As we mount the bank, we see a Cottage facing us,

backed by thick woods. The inclosure connected with it embraces a garden. What a noble shade that oak casts on the grass,—and under it are benches, and a table covered with saucers laden with blushing berries- and a pretty girl smooths her white apron, and serves us with the whitest sugar and the richest cream. What think you Lil? This is not the Island that Prospero ruled, but it is far fuller of true marvels. Delicate Ariel never played upon his tabor such sweet music as the Falls send to us, stealing through the drowsy air: and as for dancing elves, I am sure the Fairies would pine with envy, if they saw my little merry Cousins, dancing the Polka in the shade.

But let us ramble on adown this path, which makes the circuit of the Island, towards the Falls. See the river on our right, through the fringe of shrubs upon the bank — how it ripples along, and might be taken for an ordinary stream. Here the woods deepen, and cast a melancholy shade,— scarcely a beam of sunlight checkers our path. We are very near the lower end of the Island. Ah! now it grows lighter, and you see the point, and a board, nailed for a seat between two trees. There place yourselves,— though

it may be with trembling,—and look upon the opposite Canadian precipice, frowning above the river,—and the river, far, far below, forcing a narrow way through a deep chasm. You can just see the foam of the rapids above the Whirlpool, some three miles off. You may well shudder Lily. Were you to advance



six paces, you would be dashed to pieces on the rocks two hundred feet below. This spot is much higher than the American Fall,— and descends to its level by a narrow ridge called — excuse me, Lily !— called the Hog's Back. It has I do assure you, no possible

resemblance to any part of the unclean animal.—Come, we'll descend it. Let me go first! Give me your hand, and look to your footing, while Charles follows with care. Now compose yourself, and look around from the Hog's Back. This stream tumbling by your very feet into that awful chasm, is the Central Fall — beyond is Prospect Island — and beyond, the great American Fall. Is it not glorious?

Advance, my Lily, nearer to the edge, while I do hold you by the wrist, and look down upon the base of the cliff. See those huge blocks of reddish stone, now covered, and now disclosed, by the clouds of ever-rising mist, while half a dozen rainbows flit around in all their glory. Those rocks have fallen from such a height as this, ages ago. How earth must have trembled when they fell!

We'll turn up the stream a few paces, and cross the foot-bridge to Prospect Island. How deep a shade these cedars cast! What a beautiful wild lily you have found. Charles!—give it to our tame one! You are not tame, you say! Well, then, bound over this fallen branch, and see how calm the water is, between our little isle and the next one above it! It seems scarcely possible

THE THREE PROFILES. P. 53

that this dead quiet should be but a scant hundred feet above the Fall, at the foot of the Island. Let me draw aside this wild vine, and give you passage to the edge of the American Fall. What a proud sheet of foam it is! There is scarcely a spot upon it, from the top to the bottom of its whole surface, but is as white as snow. It shifts and changes continually, like a sea in motion. My hands tremble, and my head grows dizzy, as you look into the abyss; and so I'll draw you back, my cousins, and leave the islet.

This foot-bridge is more substantial than it looks. We can praise it now, for it has carried us safely over. We'll go up the stream, and so around the Hog's-Back. This path is steep and slippery. Tumble over that prostrate tree, and up the hill with you, Charles! while I help Miss Lily over, and bear her up the difficult steep. Let's sit down on the bank, and rest awhile.

Charles, I see, has scratched his face a little. How happened it? A briar, as I supposed, athwart the path, has drawn that blood: but Captain Charles, I'm glad to see, cares as little for such trifles, as does Miss Lily for a soiled slipper. Talking of faces, reminds me of the Three Profiles, which once existed in the rocky face

of the cliff this side of the American Fall, and were visible from the Hog's-Back. I looked for them when we were there, just now, but Time had eaten them away. I'll show you, at the Hotel, a sketch of them, made by a friend. Such things are what philosophers used to call *lusus naturæ*—that is, freaks of nature. People are fond of finding, or imagining such resemblances. These three heads were supposed to resemble, the uppermost one, a negro—the next, a young white man—the lowest, an old man in spectacles.—But it is time to dress for dinner. Let us hasten back the way we came.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FALLS CONTINUED — THE FISH-POND — THE STROLL ON THE RIVER BANK — THE WATER LILY — THE WATER FLIES — THE CAPTIVE EAGLE — THE PAGODA — THE BLACK SQUIRREL.

Dinner has consumed much of our time; and in return, as Charles says, we have consumed much of the dinner. This walking on the green sward, and rambling in the fresh air, certainly gives one a great appetite. Our stroll must be short this afternoon;—so let's avoid the Island, and ramble about the Village.

Here is a house built on the river's edge, behind the the Cataract Hotel, and joined to it by a gallery connecting their upper stories. Under the gallery passes a sheet, and also a raceway, conducting the water from the rapids above, to various mills scattered along the bank. Where are you going Mr. J? Shall we go with

him to his Fish-pond? Go on, Sir! and we'll follow. Why, Lil! he passes into the cellar of the house on the river—a strange place to keep living fishes. Not so strange either, for the river water flows through it, making a clear, and pebbly pond, through which, on our entrance, wildly dash, in all directions, a thousand fishes. They are regularly fed, and are taken out with a hand net, as they are needed to supply our table. How easily they move. A fish is as graceful in the water, as is a swallow in its element.

We'll follow the race-way. Here's a fence, would trouble Lily, were it not for the stile. Above you see a dam runs, from the outside of the race, into and up the river, and makes a little pond. Upon its edge, amid flat, floating leaves, a large white flower just raises itself above the surface. Charles has got it, though he reached it with difficulty, with his crooked cane,—and here it is. You may well call it beautiful and sweet; for it too is a lily—the water-lily. The leaves are white as purity—its central stamens, yellow as grained gold,—and its perfume makes Charley think of Araby the blest. This flower has its peculiarities. It rises from the root by a long, slender,

flexible stalk. The outer-leaves, or calyx, as botanists term them — are larger than the flower-leaves, and can inclose them. This lily loves the day, and, as the sun descends, she draws the calyx so closely to, that not a particle of water can reach her delicate petals, and then withdraws beneath the wave, and sleeps until the sun, fresh-risen, recalls her to the surface.

We are now opposite the head of Iris Island. We'll sit awhile under these trees. The rapids, you observe commence but a short way above it. The River seems expanded into a broad Lake, on the further side of which you can just see Chippewa. Above, in the river, is Navy Island. What myriads of large brown flies are playing on the water's edge. How delicate their gauzy wings! How those fishes jump after them! In a few days, or even hours, those myriads, now so happy, will all be dead. It is true their lives are short, dear Charles! but then, they're happy. Born in the water, they live, and love, and die in the air:— What more do we? and then perchance, their little, span, may seem to them as long as our threescore years and ten appear to us.

You've chased that butterfly long enough, my wild cousins, and I do not think your treasures of old acorn-cups worth bearing off. The river shines like a silver sea, and the cool air that fans it is most delicious: But, let us wander back into the village.

I dont wonder that scream startled you. Here is the author of it. The white head, keen eye, and noble bearing of that large bird, prove him to be the Eagle — the Emblem of our Country. His great grandfather probably built his nest, or eyrie, on Iris Island, the same year that Columbus landed in America. But this poor fellow is captive now. A chain confines him by the leg, and prevents him from pouncing on that foolish fellow, who is thrusting a stick at him. He raises his wings, arches his neck, and fairly yells with rage. Not far from him you see another — smaller, darker, and without that white head, which gives to this species the appearance of being bald,— whence it is called the bald-headed eagle. This is a young one, and his head, like mine, will grow white with years.

You have read how the Eagle robs the Fish-Hawk, which is another kind of Eagle:— How he watches until the hawk has pounced upon a fish in the water,

and is bearing off his captive in his talons,— and then soars above him, and swoops at him, and compels him to drop his prey, and at once appropriates it to his own uses. The Eagle's nest is very large, and is generally in some high mountain, untravelled forest, or inaccessible island. Two or three however are usually to be found in the woods along the Niagara River. It can hardly be called a nest. It is a mere platform of large sticks, laid on the topmost branches of some tall tree. Hither the Eagle and his mate bear to their young, fishes, birds, hares, lambs, and other game, in an abundance that is astonishing. The bones at the foot of the tree betray the nest: But wo to the incautious woodsman who assails it, when the old Eagles are in hearing!— They'll fly to the rescue, and attack, with beak and claws, the assailant, and drive him far away.

How beauteous, is this view from Prospect Point. Yes, Lily, that is the Hog's Back where we stood this morning. I'll sit awhile; while you swing, and romp gently, with those pretty children in the grove: And, when you're tired of that, we'll turn into the garden just below. You'll find there a bowling-green, and Pagoda. No! No! Not a Pagoda, such as the Chi

nese make of porcelain,—with little terraces hung round with golden bells; but, that mere wooden tower of open lattice work, you, see behind that fence. It has stairs inside, up which you climb for the prospect's sake. Do not play too long, my Cousins, for the sun is now in the west.

What, through already! The view from the Pagoda was fine. But what little animal is here, caged so handsomely, with his long feathery tail, and sable coat! It is a squirrel, Charles!—resembling the gray squirrel in everything but color. It is very common in this part of the country, and lives on buds, and bark, and acorns and nuts, which it hoards up for winter use, in a hollow tree, where it resides. In summer, it builds in some tree-top, of green, leafy twigs, a cooler house, shaped like a ball, covered at the top, and having the entrance in its side. It is a very active creature, and makes leaps that would astonish you. It increases rapidly: And sometimes emigrates, in crowds, like the Germans to our country. And then it will swim the broadest rivers. I have seen them frequently crossing the Niagara. No, Lily, dear! The tales you've read, about their launching pieces of bark, for boats, and mounting

on them, and spreading to the wind, their tails, for sails and so navigating wide streams, are purely fictions. A squirrel when fairly tired with swimming, would get atop of a piece of bark, or any floating thing, and sit upon it and rest; and then, its tail would curl up to its ears. These stories may have sprung from some one's having seen a single squirrel so floating. You will discover, my Cousins! before you are fifty years older, that a very little truth suffices to make great errors seem true. Truth is precious as gold: and so we beat it out as thin as gold leaf, and gild with it a wondrous quantity of what is not true.

But we'll in to tea. To-morrow we'll recommence our explorations.

CHAPTER VII.

RAMBLE ROUND IRIS ISLAND—THE BIDDLE STAIRS—CAVE OF THE WINDS—THE CANADIAN FALL—THE SUSPENDED ROCKS—FLYING RAINBOWS—SAM PATCH.

How happens it, Cousins, that, as yet, we have not made the circuit of our enchanted island? Certainly, we have shown less enterprize than did poor Crusoe in his unwelcome kingdom. We have not seen a thousandth part of the great Cataract. Let us commence, this afternoon, our ramble around the Island, and explore it thoroughly and devoutly, like pilgrims at Nature's choicest shrine!

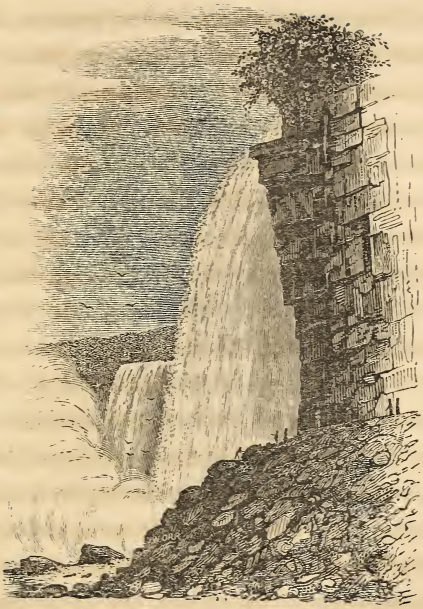
You show good taste, dear Lily, in admiring so earnestly this noble prospect from the Hog's Back,—much better taste than Charles exhibits, in likening ourselves to the venturous Lilliputians, who stood on the raised right hand of captain Gulliver. The path turns here

and follows the verge of the cliff to the Canadian Fall. We'll have a short race along it!

Halt! and enjoy this view. This is a dizzy height! How green the great Horse-shoe Fall looks in the middle!—how wondrous white its foaming sides! And, in the awful chasm below our feet, how calmly the River seems to glide along, though its whole surface is foam-covered! Its distance gives it a seeming quietude. In fact, it is full of counter-currents, and whirling and shifting eddies, and it boils in places, like a seething cauldron, and dashes ashore its sudden and intermitting waves. This trench cut in the brow of the precipice, leads to some rude steps, which conduct us to the Biddle Staircase. Be not afraid! It is bound securely to the face of the rock;—and is, in fact, a succession of steps, descending spirally around a huge mast, and thoroughly enclosed or boarded in from the top to the bottom, excepting the doors above and below, and some loopholes in the sides. Give Lil, your supporting hand, and follow me! Here is the entrance;—and now down we go, turning, and ever turning, in this narrow tower, which is like a vast screw, incased, and planted perpendicularly against the precipice. How long it is! It has

eighty steps. How hollow our foot-falls sound! And the whole fabric trembles, or seems to tremble, as with giddy heads we wind adown! How welcome is the light streaming in from the lower entrance! How pleasant is the sense of standing upon firm earth, though the massive rock shoots up a hundred feet above our heads, arching and impending over us! This well-worn path which winds along the base of the cliff, is eighty feet above the raging River: the shelving descent to which is, as you see, over broken shingle, and large rocks, which have tumbled from above, ages ago. Let us first walk down the path towards the Middle Fall.

Here it is: And, as it leaps from the precipice above, it forms an arch, and strikes the ground at a distance, so that you can walk between it and the wall of rock, but not in comfort. The hollow space behind the tumbling water, is called the Cave of the Winds; and it is rightly named,—for all the Winds, except the Zephyrs, make it their dwelling, and quarrel in it. In their contention, they dash the spray about in the contracted cavern, so fiercely, that one's clothes are wet through in an instant. We'll not enter here, for our dresses are but illy fitted for an encounter with the young water-

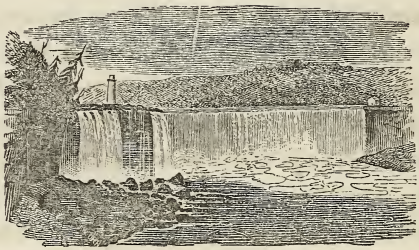


CAVE OF THE WINDS. P 70

spouts, that dance about in this darksome cave. We'll see all that can here be seen, and more, to-morrow, at Table-Rock. Now we'll walk up to the Canadian Fall, awe-struck and musing.

The stones above our heads hang loosely, as though a breath would detach and dash them down upon us. A small fragment from that great height would slay the mailed rhinoceros;—and there, on the River's edge, lie many masses, which have toppled from the crag above, of such a size, that the least of them would have ground a mastodon to dust, and covered it forever. Good-bye, for the present, old staircase! Here, a little spring of water oozes from the cliff, and trickles across the path; and there, in the path, lie some fresh-fallen stones, any one of which would have brought certain death, had it fallen upon either of us. Others may fall at any moment: And yet we walk as securely as in our quiet homes, under the shadow of God's protecting will. Wherever we may be, 'tis He sustains us—and only He. In scenes like this, we realize the solemn truth, that Death is ever hovering over us, waiting but God's permission to destroy. His dart may pierce us now; but not unless permitted. God, in His providence,

would seem rather to have banished the destroying angel from these fearful scenes, so solemn and religious in their tendencies. These rocks are crumbling away continually, and their fragments dash daily upon this much-frequented path: And yet, of the very many thousand people who have pursued it, but one has been death-stricken by them.



This is a noble view of the whole British Fall. At its end is the Table Rock. Before us, on the American side, is a dark wall of massive stone, naked, or here and there whitened by small descending streams,—while, in the midst, the deep River has collected its main column, and pours it from the dizzy height. Earth does tremble, and a white cloud, visible thirty miles away, hovers

high o'er the Fall, while the voice of many waters is sounding in our ears, and rainbows play around the floating, shifting spray. That tower on the cliff above, is Terrapin Tower. That female waving her handkerchief upon its top, is not a little girl, but a tall belle. But see those masses of rock perched on the very edge of the Fall. It would seem as though a child's arm could topple them down,—and as though their descending force would shake earth's centre. I somewhat like your comparison, Master Charles! That massive barrier of rock, with the fragments poised upon its verge, may well make us think of the fabled giants who piled Pelion upon Ossa, and fought against great Jove: And we may say the Titans have raised here their castle walls, and placed upon its battlements those rocks, in readiness to hurl them upon their assailants. 'Twas thus of old that cities and castles were defended.

Let us approach the water's side, and take our stand on yonder vast table of stone beneath the Fall. The descent was rough and precipitous, indeed; but, are you not well rewarded, Charles, for the trouble you had among the rocks? How awful is the unceasing roar, the constant rush of the cataract! How the waters

whirl, and boil, and fight like embattled armies! How they shift and vary, from foam to glassy currents, from peace to fury! The little bay by our rock's side, is now calm as a sunny lake; and now it rises in a wave which surges high and breaks among the shingle. All is motion—but motion on the grandest scale. The air alone seems stilled by awe, and the majestic sun sheds rainbows in the ascending mist.

But the wind springs up in gusts, and the spray is driven upon us, and the rainbow follows. How beautiful its colors! How strange to see it close to us! Surely the boy in the story who chased it, might have caught it here,—for it has spread all its colors at our feet, and clothed Lily in the very garb that Iris wore. The rainbows which encircle this isle give it its name. But, whew! how the spray beats upon us! Let's scramble up to the path as soon as possible!

How weary is the ascent of this same Biddle Staircase. Here we go, tramp, tramp, tramp!—slowly, wearily, up the long line of steps, with failing knees, and shortened breath. I'm very glad to recline upon the top of the bank once more. Sit down, my Cousins, and I'll tell you a story while you rest.

In the year 1829, a platform nearly a hundred feet higher than the river, was built above it here, and a man twice leaped from it into the water, and rose and swam ashore. He was a poor and drunken sailor, and performed this strange feat, partly for money, and partly to be wondered at. His daring leap showed great courage—the absence of all fear of death. His exploits in this way were wonderful, and, to effect them, he hazarded all that Curtius threw away, for Rome. The unreflecting vulgar, to whom daring is the whole of heroism, flocked around Sam. Patch,—that was his name,—and looked up to him as a hero. He was none, because his courage had no noble end in view. Lofty motives, and good aims, give daring its highest quality. Without them it is not greatness, but mere apathy, or blind ferocity. Sam. had his day, like every other dog, as the saying has it. He jumped again, at the Genesee Falls, near Rochester, from a height of one hundred and twenty five feet, and was drowned in the water where he cast himself. His name and leaps are now all but forgotten; and when remembered, by those whose praise is worth the having, it is with pity and contempt.

CHAPTER VIII.

RAMBLE AROUND THE ISLAND CONTINUED — TERRAPIN TOWER—THE RAPIDS—THE THREE SISTERS—THE HEAD OF THE ISLAND.

The day is waning, and scarce half our task is done. Up Cousins! but no running now, for I catch a glimpse of shawls amid the shrubs bordering the path. We'll walk gravely and demurely as people of our years should do — at least until we've passed those gorgeous dames, who, for aught I know, may be Victoria and her waiting ladies. True it is, Lily, as you say, that, they looked quite good-natured; and, at most, could but have laughed a little at our race, and straight would have forgotten it and us. Who can bring ill temper, or bad passions, into scenes like these?

Come back, Charles! You must not venture to the verge of the abyss. It is sometimes crumbling, and

often slippery, and treacherous: And the pleasure of presenting to Lily, that over-hanging flower, cannot justify the awful risk you'd run in reaching it. That building on the opposite, Canadian cliff, is the Museum. One bright day it was visited by a gay party, of whom the life and joy was a lively, giddy, wilful girl. She saw on the brow of the precipice a tempting flower, and sought to pluck it. The earth at the edge crumbled beneath her incautious feet; and in an instant, her fair form was dashed upon those ragged rocks below. Did she survive? Oh, no! She never spoke after her fall, but lay there, a crushed and formless mass. An iron image, falling from that height, upon those hard rocks, would be shattered all to pieces. It is said indeed, that, many years ago, a little below the American Staircase, a man, flying, in the dark, from men with whom he had quarreled, ran off the bank, and yet survived: But he did not drop the eighty feet, unchecked. His fall was broken by the tree-tops of the thick cedars below, and stayed by wild vines and bushes through which he crashed. Still almost his every bone was broken, and his escape with life is remembered here, as a great wonder.

Here we pass the edge of the Canadian Fall, and look up upon the Rapids. The British river rushes at our feet, and, a little to our left, springs into the abyss, which sends up a canopy of cloud. That little tower, built on a rock, some rods in the River, and accessible by a narrow, slightly-constructed, wooden bridge, is Terrapin Tower. It is but a few feet from this side of the green Horse-shoe, which you will see to great advantage from its top. Go down and visit it, and I'll stay here upon the bank. The water this side of the tower is shallow, and, as it ripples o'er the rocks, you might take it for a brawling trout stream, could you shut out from view the terrible torrent beyond.

Your wonder at the view you've had from the tower, pleases me, Charles! It proves that you begin, however faintly, to appreciate Niagara. You have not seen it in its grandest forms as yet. How pleasant is this walk, skirted, on one hand, by the ancient woods,—on the other, by the River. The Island's surface has been left untouched, save at the head, and the clearing for the garden by the bridge. These large trees grew here before Father Hennepin crossed himself in wonder, at the sight of the Cataract. The eagle made on them

its eyrie; and they looked down upon the Indian, as he came here with silent tread, to bury his great departed, beneath the sacred soil. How variable is this mighty river as it rushes over the rocks, from ledge to ledge! There is a jet of water, like a fountain, playing perpetually. The river here is more than a mile wide; and it is growing wider, by undermining the bank of the island, of which many acres have been swept away within ten years.

Far, far away, in the very midst of the wild rapids, you see a low islet, with a few willow bushes. If I ever heard its name, I have forgotten it. A proper one would be the Inaccessible Island,— for it is the only one of all the little ones which beautify the Falls, which has remained unvisited: and no man has ever dreamed of attempting to attain its lonely shore. Those fairy isles close to the head of the island, are the Three Sisters;—so named, because, with their dark cedars and general outlines, they are so similar,— and because they lie so lovingly together. What a dark, melancholy shade these thick trees cast upon our path! How lovely this cascade and rushing stream that divide the first Sister from our little continent! And now, the Sisters

being passed, we've reached the head of the Island,—at either side of which, at first, the river gently laves the greensward of the margin. Here boats from the American shore landed, before the bridge was built—here, where the river comes swiftly but smoothly down to the Island, and then hesitates, as though uncertain where to go, before it divides and passes by on either hand, to form the rapids. The broad river above, looks like a sea. How lovely is the view! How quiet! What a contrast it presents to the majestic fury of the Rapids, or the solemn grandeur of the Falls! Words cannot describe, nor mortal colors paint it. Surely, in scenes like these, we must speak only in broken phrases, or, with Thompson, in his Hymn, despairing of expression, exclaim,

"Come then, expressive Silence, muse His praise."

The sun has dropped behind the trees in Canada, and the night-chirpings of the caty-did, begin to mingle with the hollow rumbling of the Falls, and the dash of the wild rapids. Let us hasten adown the American side of the Island! There is the garden, and so the circuit of the Island is at last completed. Now across the

bridge, and home as quick as possible! The moon will ride high in the heavens to-night, and we'll revisit, by her glimpses, these beauteous scenes, after due rest.

CHAPTER IX.

NIGHT RAMBLE ON THE ISLAND—FORMER NAME—REMAINS OF ANIMALS—MOONLIGHT SCENERY—THE LUNAR BOW—THE ISLAND IN WINTER.

The Island, Cousins, was formerly called Goat Island and indeed still retains that name. It obtained it from the fact, that, of a variety of animals placed upon it, by a Mr. Stedman, in 1770, one venerable goat alone survived, and was for many years its only occupant. Its present, more appropriate, poetical name, was bestowed upon it by the commissioners who ascertained our boundary, under the Treaty of Ghent. Its soil is fertile, and continual moisture makes it productive. It holds too the remains of ancient races, long passed away. Human bones have been disinterred upon it,

which must have been buried there for centuries — so long ago, that, when exposed to the air, they crumble into dust. Tradition saith nothing concerning them. A tooth of the Mammoth has been found in the vicinity of the Island, so situated, as to warrant the conclusion, that that monster was no stranger to it: and the relics of little animals are found upon it, that must have had their being before Adam breathed, or the huge Mastodon erected its giant bulk, and made the earth tremble as he walked. This Island, cousins, was once in the bed of the river, and covered by it; and this fact is proven, beyond all cavil, by the existence in its soil, of shells, such as now live and flourish in the stream. They could live, of course, only in water; — and they lived where they are found. But I will not talk to you now, about Geology. We'll reserve that for our quiet home, and the long winter evenings. It proves all I have told you.

How calmly, in her brightness, the Moon floats in the heavens! See how that light cloud is lit up, and beautified, as it passes over her disk! She seems to move, rather than it, and to emerge from its slight shadow, with joy at being again undimmed. Here, as

we walk, in the sweet summer night, towards the bridge, the scene recalls some noble lines of Milton.

"I walk unseen,
" On the dry smooth-shaven green,
" To behold the wand'ring moon,
" Riding near her highest noon,
" Like one that had been led astray
" Through the Heaven's wide pathless way,
" And oft, as if her head she bow'd,
" Stooping through a fleecy cloud."

Do you observe Lily, the difference in the noises of day and night? Our footfalls on the bridge sound deeper and more distinctly, and the rushing, dashing voice of these wild waters, is, to my ear at least, more articulate and musical than in the glare of day. The rapids now are lovely. The moon burnishes the moving waves, and scatters her silver o'er the waters. But we must not lose this splendid opportunity of seeing the Lunar Rainbow. Hurry cousins, across Bath Island, and up the steep bank of Iris! What a nice run! But, you little racers, you pushed me rather hard. I am almost out of breath. Who is it, of whom Scott says, I think in the Lady of the Lake—

" He could right up Ben Lomond press,
" And not a sob the toil confess."

Certainly I am not that individual, nor anything to be

compared to him. We'll follow the path, and skirt the Island around its lower point. No stopping now to catch fire-flies, or lightning bugs, as we used to call them when I was a boy in petticoats!

There is something very solemn in the deep voice of the Cataract by night. It makes one think of the past, and ponder on the future. When you have lived to be as old as Cousin George, it will sometime fill you with unutterable thoughts, soften you to tears, and call you irresistibly to deep devotion. Now take my hands, and feel your way with careful feet, while I grope out the path. What a thick darkness was in the shadow of that grove! How enlivening the transition to this silvery moonlight on the Hog's Back! We are not the only visitors of the isle;—for see, a gentleman and lady occupy the wooden bench, and look out upon the River. We'll not remain here, for the chances are ninety-nine in a hundred, they would rather be only with each other and this romantic scene.

That's the Terrapin Tower. How distinctly it stands forth in the moonlight! Now, look around, from this part of the bridge. How different from the day-view; and yet perhaps even more impressive! The scene is

not so distinctly laid open and revealed to us, as in the clear light of day; and the shadows of the night lend depth, and height, and breadth, to every thing; and so sublime the imagination. But where's the Lunar bow? Why, Charles!—why, Lily! how impatient you are, and, I may add, how unobserving! There it is. Why, dont you see it? at the top of the mist that curls up on the right,—like the halo around the head of a pictured Saint? Its colors are faint. There is some truth, in your remark, Charles, that it is one of those things, whose singularity rather than splendor makes them famous. We wish to have it in our power to say we've seen it, though we admire it far less than the gorgeous Sun-bow. Dear Lily, you have convinced me, for the millionth time, that there is in your sex a refinement of taste superior to our own — something so nice and exquisite, that we rude natures, cannot make it ours,— and yet which we can appreciate under your instructions. This perhaps is a provision of Nature, designed to make the companionship of woman so delightful to her rougher mate. I see, now that you've alluded to it, in that dim bow, a purity, and spirituality before unnoticed. It is, as you say, the ghost of the rain-

bow, — even more ethereal than that ethereal glory. It is sad, and solemn, and lonely, like a good spirit just fading into air, after a kindly visitation. Let us resume our walk, and move up along the rapids.

How like an enchanted land is the whole landscape! What a brilliant, shimmering light the Moon casts over it! It reminds you of the descriptions of the grotto of Antiparos, and other sparry caves as seen by torch-light. O, if you could but see it in winter, how much more striking would seem the resemblance! or rather, how infinitely above all such comparison you'd find this Island.

When winter has done its worst, and covered the earth with its pure snow mantle, and bound up with icy fetters all common streams, the untameable Niagara scoffs at its power, and rushes from Lake Erie to the Falls, exulting in its freedom, and thunders from the precipice, and sends into the frosty air perpetually its canopy of mist. The mist sinks slowly down and settles on the island, covering and moistening every thing; and, as it falls, winter asserts its power, and freezes it, into a pearly or crystal covering of every twig, and leaf. The trees are cased in ice. Their

boughs are bent by the weight, and droop down in arches. Long icicles, assuming oft fantastic forms, are pendent from the rocks. The groves wear a lustrous splendor, but somewhat of the awfulness of desolation,—for they are still, and lifeless. No living thing is visible in them. Not a sound is heard, but the crashing of our own foot-steps through the icy snow, save when the gentle air sighs through the wood, and the stirred branches touch each other, and emit a tinkling sound. And then, the light! It is oppressive in its splendor, like the garments of the "Shining Ones" who do God's bidding near His throne. And when the Sun, throws his beams aslant into the wood, they are caught and broken, by the silver branches, into all the colors of the rainbow, which dance through and fill the air, Believe me, Cousins!—All you've read of magic gardens, and of fairy land, fictitious though they be, do fall far short of real Niagara in winter.

But we must hurry homeward. That black cloud darkens the sky, and threatens a storm.

CHAPTER X.

IRIS ISLAND CONTINUED—BOWS AND ARROWS—WILD PLANTS —THE DETROIT—THE HERMIT.

You've conquered, Cousins! We'll linger another day on the American side of the River. Where shall we stroll? On the Island! You seem to love that Island, and I am sure I love it too. We will rove another day upon it, and explore the tangled path that crosses from the Garden to the Canadian Rapids.

How very thick is the shade of these tall trees! And so, you've bought bows and arrows, and brought them with you. Charles is a bold archer, though he'll never draw his arrow to the head, if he pull it only with the thumb and fore-finger. Lay your other fingers along the string, and pull thus;—and so you'll bend the bow with ease, and send your shaft glancing among the tree-tops. And Lily too, must play the Amazon. Nay, be

not ashamed! It is not an ungentle craft. Archery is graceful and elegant as an accomplishment, and most bracing and healthful as exercise. Pursue it, gentle Cousin, if you will,—but not in a savage temper. Let men alone destroy. But these weapons, in your hands at least, come not within the prohibition of the use of destructive arms upon this island. Here the birds and squirrels live in safety: And I think, Master Charles, that little red rascal you just shot at so widely, hardly considers you dangerous, if in earnest, in shooting at him. He did indeed scamper up the tree in haste; but there you see him, on that low bough, sitting erect, with his feathery tail curled up his back, nibbling something which he holds in his fore-paws, and looking demurely at us. Certainly it is far pleasanter to possess the confidence of these merry creatures, and watch their gambols, than to have them fly our presence in fear. Pursue your sports, while I seat myself in the heart of the island, under that tree, and read awhile.

What! all your arrows lost? Both your quivers emptied! Certainly the "merry greenwood" requires a quick eye and a ready memory to retrieve one's shafts. But where's the game? What a shower of leaves, and

flowers, and fruits, falls in my lap for answer! And must I tell you what they all are? Here goes then for a lecture botanical. This strongly-odorous, humble plant, with its small pink flower, is herb-robert,—a species of geranium. Throw it away, for I like it not! This large leafless cluster of red coral berries, is called Cahosh—and the same name is given to this other cluster of white ones,—with this difference, that one, and which of them I know not, is called false, and the other true Cahosh. One or both of them are believed to possess great medical virtue, by some persons. However this may be, their berries, though not eatable, are very ornamental in our woods. This large, yellow fruit, is the mandrake, or wild lemon. The latter fruit it much resembles. It is full of a cooling pulp, most grateful to my palate. Try it! Is it not delicious? This large, veined leaf, sprang from a root I'll find and show you. Here it is growing, and I'll dig it up. In the early spring, a white and starry flower grows from the root on a naked stalk, in company with two leaves like this. Here it is, unbroken. Cut it, Lily! See how the blood, or juice like blood, oozes from it! This is the blood-root, common in our country, and, like almost all com-

mon things, having useful qualities. The Indians used it as a paint, and call it Puccoon. It is employed in medicine ; and it serves too, to give to young girls' cheeks a bloom, more becoming than that which rouge imparts to ladies' faces. This is the wild snow-berry. But we must defer examining the residue of your plants for the present. The depth of the wood is not so cool at mid-day, as is the River's banks. We'll walk on to the rapids.

The rapids are glorious as ever. They seem to stir and cool the air above them, and fan it to the shore. There,—it is impossible to indicate a spot to others, in this wide, convulsed river,—but afar out, and opposite where we stand, a ship's hull rested, a few years since. I'll tell you its history in brief.

When the last war broke out with Great Britain, both sides considered it important to have command upon Lake Erie ; and each of them endeavored to equip a fleet superior to the other's. The English succeeded in first placing a strong force upon the Lake. Captain Barclay commanded their flotilla, and his flag waved from the noblest, strongest of her ships, called the Detroit. He scoured the Lake, all unopposed, until

Commodore Perry, our hero, constructed at Erie, his vessels, and armed and led them against the enemy. The two fleets met on the 10th day of September, 1813, and battled against each other for many hours. Then the Detroit was thronged with men who fought against our countrymen, and her rude cannon hurled destruction among them. But we conquered, and Barclay lay upon her deck, wounded almost to death, amidst the corpses of his sailors, while blood flowed all around. He was an unsuccessful hero; but, he survived, to be honored by his victors, and wedded to a noble woman, who loved him, notwithstanding his calamity. But the Detroit was sunk by her captors, and remained covered by American waters for a long time. For more than twenty years the fishes of our Lake roved through her hull at will. Then she was raised, and refitted, and employed in commerce. She carried goods to and fro, and was a dull, lumbering trader, for some years, until she was so old and worn, that she was laid aside as unfit, even for that employment. In 1841, her hull was purchased for a few dollars; and it was advertised for a long while, that, on such a day, she would be sent adrift over the Falls. On that day, from far and wide, came trooping

crowds, to see her take the fatal leap, and perish worthily. The old ship was towed into the stream above, and left to her fate. Down she came into the rapids in gallant style, but struck upon the ledge, right opposite, and grounded fast. There she remained for years. Time parted her timbers gently, at intervals, and carried her, piecemeal, down the cataract.

How lovely is the circuit of this island! We cannot tread it too often. Here, near the head of the island,

are the remains of a log-hut, where Francis Abbott, the Hermit of the Falls, resided for a time. But little is certainly known about him. In 1829 he came here

in seeming poverty, and sought, or affected to seek seclusion. He asked permission to live on one of the Three Sisters, but was refused. He then took possession of this Cottage, and lived in it for nearly two years; when he built himself a hut near Prospect Point, and resided in it until his death, which happened in the summer of 1831. He was accidentally drowned, in bathing beneath the Falls. His father was a clergyman in England, and, it is said, made him an ample allowance. His conversation proved him to be a man liberally educated; but the praises bestowed upon his mind and manners must be taken with much allowance. His conduct may have sprung from a frivolous vanity of being singular;—it may have originated in remorse for crime committed,—or in hatred for his species,—or from fancied wrongs; but, whatever was the cause, we cannot but trace it to weakness, or to wickedness. No man is wise, or great, in shunning duty. Duty demands that we should associate with our fellows, and play our part in life, by doing all the good we can. We may pity Francis Abbott, as one misguided by his own passions, or the victim of his own weakness; but we cannot admire him. We would despise his imitators; and he

was but a distant imitator of many who abandoned social life, lived miserably and uselessly, and were forgotten, long before his time.

CHAPTER XI.

DESCENDING THE AMERICAN STAIRS — THE CLIFTON HOUSE — THE FERRY — FLOATING FISHES — THE CANADIAN SIDE OF THE RIVER — CAMERA LUCIDA — MUSEUM.

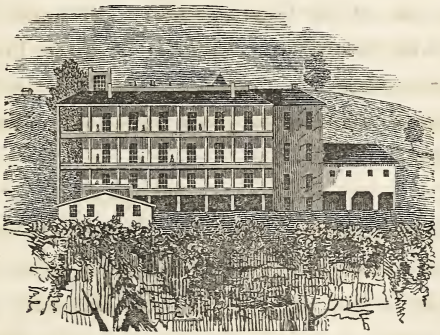
Come, cousins, quick! I'm all agog for Canada! One would think, from the slowness of your motions, you were afraid of being made captive by the British. Take your bow and arrows, Charles! Tho' you're an indifferent archer, I'll be bound they'll prove a sufficient defence against all dangers you will there encounter, save perils flowing from your own giddiness: and, in your sex, my Lily, there is a sanctity, which has always been acknowledged by the Anglo-Saxon race, whether in war or peace. It is natural to expect great differences, between what is known, and what is new to us. Leaving one's country for the first time, whether by crossing a river, an imaginary line drawn on the land, or a dangerous ocean, may well excite feelings of appre-

hension, as well as expectations of finding a strange people, and strange customs. Were you not pleased, my cousins, with the somewhat sober party of ladies and gentlemen, we met on the Island, last evening? I think you both spoke warmly of their plain, hearty manners, though Lily thought they had a touch of some odd brogue. Now, these people are English; and, what's more astonishing, cousin Lily, the young gentleman with whom you conversed so gaily for three minutes, and whom you compared to handsome cousin Ned, is an English Lord. We will find a plain, good set of folks on the other side, you may rely on it.

Prospect Point you see, though we neglected it for some days, is all unaltered; and the Clifton House on the opposite bank, looks nobly in the sun. Were it of massive stone, we might deem it the stronghold of some robber chief.

Since we were here, they have altered the stairs; and one, straight flight of steps descends to the water. Here we go, clatter, clatter! I know there's an end of the descent, for I can see the bottom; but, it's a great way off, and we're not half down yet. That railroad car looks rather risky. It must be a somewhat ticklish

business, to be hauled up in that way, like a bale of goods raised into a waerhouse. But, the baggage they take up on it, must be far heavier than we; and I'll do almost anything, I think, ere I'll carry my poor body up these confounded stairs. Here we are at the bottom,



CLIFTON HOUSE.

among the rocks and the boats. Jump in, Charles! Let me hand you in, Lily, with our friendly ferryman's assistance. Now, walk carefully to the stern, and seat yourselves by me. Is it not a neat yawl? We're off, and how featly our friend with the red waistcoat, handles his oars! Now you see the Falls—the whole

line of them—the American so close at hand that the spray reaches us, and the British afar off, beyond the foot of Iris Island. We are in a strong current: and here the water dances up in pointed waves, lashing the boat, and making it rock again, though not a breath of air is stirring. What big rocks are in the water by the landing; and on the biggest, reclines an angler, lazily fishing in the unquiet stream. His thoughts, I'm sure, are anywhere but with his fishing;—and, very probably, are reverently bent on the great Author of the wonders disclosed on every hand.

What are you looking at, so intently, Charles? I see it now rippling the water, and I've grasped it in passing. Here it is. It is not a sea-serpent, but a small yellow pike. Let us get out now, and walk leisurely up this winding road. It was cut into the rock with difficulty. You ask why that pike was floating on the surface! Poor fellow, it could not help it. To save its life it could not force itself beneath the water, because, either from being swept over the Falls, or dashed against the rocks below, by the strong currents, to use the common phrase, its air-bladder was broken. Let me try to explain this, and tell you something about fishes.

Fishes move gracefully and easily in the water, in all directions; but they cannot pull directly backwards with much force. Their fins are the means by which they propel themselves. The tail is their strong organ of moving forward; the little fins on the side of their breast and belly assist it, and are the sole instruments of backward motion. The fins placed on the back, and below near the tail, being vertical, do not aid them in swimming, but may serve to guide their motions: and the back fin is bristled with sharp spines, and so is effective, as defensive armor. If you cut up a fish, you'll find it contains a small, closed bladder, distended with air; and, this excepted, every other part of it is heavier than, and sinks at once in water. This then is the means by which the fish is rendered as light as the element in which it lives, and moves, and has its being. It enables the fish to poise itself in the water, and rise and sink at pleasure. I have observed that fishes, when freshly bereft of life, or greatly injured, float on the surface. I infer, perhaps erroneously, that, when the fish is in health, its muscle, or flesh, contracts upon the bladder, and compresses it; but, when death or disease weakens the muscles, they relax, and the bladder ex-

pands, and so makes the fish lighter than the water, and lifts it to the top. I mention such things now and then, my cousins, because I think they please you; and in the hope they'll lead you to observe the beings around you, and to reflect and reason on what attracts your observation.

Here we are on the hill, with but light purses, in a foreign country, but not exactly among strangers. We'll make the Clifton our head-quarters for a day or two. I have a slight head-ache, and will sleep it off, if I can, after Lily has bathed my temples with her nice cologne. While I nap it, you may wander where you will; but I'd advise you to walk up the River, towards the Fall. You'll find on the way a Camera Lucida, which will show you all the surrounding scenery; and also a Museum well worth a visit. Beyond the Museum you must not go. Promise it, Cousins! Now I'm certain you will not; and I've secured the pleasure of being with you on your first visit to Table-Rock.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CAMERA LUCIDA — THE MUSEUM — THE PORCUPINE — WATER FOWL — THE RAPIDS ABOVE TABLE ROCK — THE CRANE.

And so the Camera was fine and surprising, and you saw exhibited by it, the woods, and fields, and falls, all as like as the reality; and men and women walking, children romping, and cattle grazing in the paths and fields. And the living foxes at the Museum were so cunning,—the other captive animals so funny,—and the stuffed birds, and other curiosities so fine! Did you see the porcupine in the collection? Did you notice the numbers and variety of ducks and other waterfowl? While we walk to Table Rock, a scant half-mile, along the River's side, I'll tell you about these things.

When I was a boy and began to shoot with the bow, I used to think of conquering everything. I was to be

a hero, and slay more lions, serpents, and other monsters, than did Hercules. But I was, in fact, as Charles is now, far more like Sagittarius, the heavenly Archer, than like Hercules, the God of Strength. Why? Why is Charles more like that sign of the Zodiac, than like that Son of Jove? Answer yourselves,—you chits,—the conundrum I have stumbled on! With deep study you may make it out. You are mistaken Master Charles, and have shot wide of the mark. It is not because you are more dexterous than strong—nor by reason of your shining qualities. Lily has hit the mark; she has pierced the bull's eye of the target. Hercules was a capital shot and made his bow famous —so is not Charles:—But the Constellation Sagittarius never yet hit anything,—nor has, as yet, my cousin, aught he aimed at. But, to return! I had the notion, which, was current in old times among naturalists, that the Porcupine shot its sharp spines into the flesh of its pursuers; and I dreaded, in imagination, this weak animal, more than a tiger. They live in this region, and were abundant many years ago. Twenty years since, in travelling from Buffalo to the Falls, with some other boys, we killed two with our sticks, in the fields

by the woodside, and I then found it to be a most helpless being. Its spines are indeed sharp, and barbed, or notched backwards, so that when they have pierced one, they are hard to draw out, and naturally work themselves farther in. They are loosely connected with the skin; and when a dog, or other animal attempts to bite, or grasp the porcupine, they penetrate its flesh, part from their native places, and remain in the wounds they make. I've known these spines to trouble a dog for months;—and where they've entered the inside of the mouth, to come out at the top of the head, and at the shoulders. It's sometimes so, you know, with pins and needles incautiously swallowed, or buried in our flesh. A needle thrust into the shoulder, has been known to wander through the body, and be extracted at the knee.

The porcupine is a harmless animal, and was supposed, by its discoverers, somewhat to resemble a pig;—in what, unless in flavor, I cannot imagine. But hence its name, which is from the Spanish tongue, and means a prickly or spiny pig. It lives on twigs, and buds, acorns, and roots, and fruits, and loves the high tree-tops. On the ground it moves slowly, and as though

ill at ease. I saw one in its native woods but a few years ago. I was angling for trouts in a small woodland stream, when one suddenly mounted on a log lying athwart the brook, and slowly commenced crossing it not twenty feet from me. It did not see me, I was confident. The place was full of bushes, so that I could not use my fishing rod to knock him on the head; and the brook yielded no pebbles. I dropped my angle, and, in my efforts to find a stick or other missile, made so much noise that he discovered his danger, turned round, recrossed leisurely, and made his way into the wood again. So you perceive I've had some opportunity of becoming acquainted with the porcupine.

As for the waterfowl you saw in the Museum, was there not a great and beautiful variety? There was the stately Swan, that poets love to celebrate,—with its arched neck, snow-white and graceful. It is fabled to sing, as it is expiring, one ravishing song; and to be mute, or make harsh noises only, until its dying hour. Whether a sound is musical, to my dull ear, and most uncultivated taste, depends somewhat on the scene and circumstance in which 'tis uttered. The swan's voice

is not altered by approaching dissolution; and death has pains for it, and draws not music from its agony: but the wild cry—scream if you so please to term it,—of the floating swan, exulting in its freedom, heard in the scenes it loves to live in, and which God made it to enjoy, is full of a most sweet music. It may not, for aught I know, accord with science: Professors may analyze, and prove it to be naught but discords;—but there is in it a natural, gushing swell, a harmony with nature, that makes it most effective melody,—a worthy portion of the great hymn of praise, which universal nature is ever chanting. The chirp of the sparrow, the twitter of the swallow, from the "straw-built shed," the cackle of the hen, the carol of the pied boblink, the caw of the hoarse crow, and the scream of the soaring eagle are all musical.

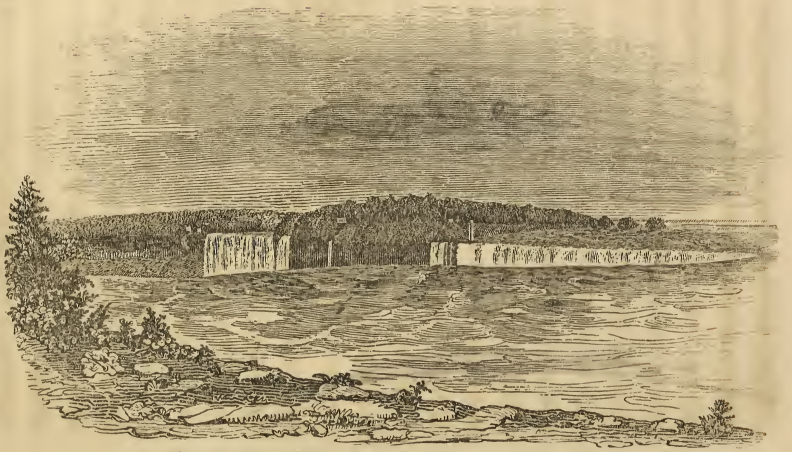
The swan, as you well know, is the largest of the water-fowl. It is endowed with great strength, and fights, not only with its beak, but with its wings. A blow of its horny pinion, it is said, will break a man's thigh-bone. The wild goose, sometimes called the Canada goose, is a small swan,—a bird of equal grace, but of inferior plumage. How great was the variety

of ducks you found in the collection! Certainly gorgeous coloring was never more freely lavished by Nature on anything than on the Wood, or Summer-Drake. How pretty was the little blue winged Teal! How like the domestic duck, the Duck and Mallard, which indeed are said to be the parents of our tame stock! And the great Loon, all speckled, and much bigger than a goose, with its short legs, snd stumpy wings,—it looks as though it could neither walk nor fly, and must perforce live in the water. That is indeed its proper element. There it moves with an ease and speed that seem miraculous. It rides on the stormiest waves, as buoyant as air, and dives with a celerity that's wonderful. Their senses of sight and hearing are most acute. I remember attempting to approach some twenty that were riding on the swell of a clear lake, some distance from the shore. I crept to the bank, and lay concealed, as I supposed, in the willows which skirted it; and levelled my rifle at the nearest Loon, and took deliberate aim, and pulled the trigger. As soon as the percussion cap exploded, with a sharp snap, and before the ball was driven from the barrel, I saw them disappear beneath the water, and then the ball skipped harmlessly along

the surface; and, in five minutes after, the vexatious birds dotted the lake full half a mile away. The loon is seldom seen in flocks. It loves lonely lakes and broad streams, remote from human haunts. Its voice is seldom heard, save shortly before a storm: And then it raises a sudden, unearthly, melancholy cry, which wails over the water for miles, startling all who hear it. Like the ducks and swans, and almost all other water-birds, it visits us only in the warm season. I breeds with us, I think. So do the Black-Duck and the Summer-Duck: But the swans and geese, and most of the ducks, make their nests only in the North, and loiter with us on their way thither, in the Spring, and when, in the Autumn, they conuct their young back to the South.

Of all that great number of swans, and geese, and ducks, and other water-fowl, excepting, I believe, the Loon, and perhaps two or three more, every specimen was furnished to the Museum by the Falls. You do not understand me, I perceive. I mean that all those birds were carried over the Falls, and drowned, or maimed, and were picked up in the eddies below, and then stuffed and placed in the Museum. How carried over the Falls? Why, they were caught in the rapids probably,

and could not escape. You seem to wonder that they did not use their wings, and fly upwards and out of danger. But could they so do? Remember that the rapids flow with almost irresistible fury; and that a bird, to rise from the water, must force its body upwards by a strong thrust of its feet. Now a duck, in a swift current, cannot strike the water with its paddles with much force, particularly if its head be up the stream. I have seen one in the swift water, approaching the rapids, with its head turned from them, apparently struggling with all its force, and uttering screams—quacks, I should say—of agony, and still forced downwards, until it turned itself around, and then, by a powerful effort, rose so that its wings could winnow the air, and flew in joy away. I have no doubt but that the birds found below the Falls, have been so hurried to destruction, in strong storms, or while sleeping on the water. I have been told, indeed, that, in flying from Lake Ontario, in the chasm, in stormy nights, particularly when the air is full of driving snow, they discern not the falling sheets of water, and dash into them, and are so drowned: But, I have more confidence in the former explanation.



VIEW FROM ABOVE TABLE ROCK, CANADA SIDE.

Why, our talk has so engrossed us, that we have fairly passed the Table-Rock by a full quarter of a mile, and are walking on a rocky flat, on a level with the rapids that hurry by us. Opposite is Iris Island, and Terrapin Tower. But what is that big bird stalking so gravely along the beach within fair bow-shot? It's no stranger to me, for I saw it here last year. Its long legs make it look as though it were on stilts, and its neck is as long as they are. It is taller than you, Charles! We'll approach it. You need not fear. It wars only with frogs, and minnows, and pigmies. It flies—how slowly and heavily, with its long neck folded upon its breast and back, and its legs protruding a mile behind! And now pausing over a large stone, it throws its long legs forwards with an awkward jerk, until they touch it, and then straightens up, and turns its head towards us. Shout! He's off again, and takes a longer flight. How queer he looks amid the green foliage of that young tree! That is the great Canadian Crane. It loves still rivers, marshy streams, and places full of springs, like this, where a little thread of water oozes from the hill at almost every step, and makes the land plashy and moist. It will stand all day in the water, or

sedgy pool, motionless, watching for fish and frogs, and nab them when they come within its reach, by a quick thrust of its long neck.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE RAPIDS — TABLE-ROCK — GULLS — TABLE-ROCK FROM BELOW — GOING BEHIND THE SHEET — THE EEL.

We stand on Table-Rock, and the great River, scarcely a step below our level, darts by our very feet, and falls but a few inches from us, into that deep and terrible abyss. Well may you gaze on this mighty scene with wonder. But stand not too near the verge! When you strive to look steadily upon a shifting object, the brain does oft grow giddy.

It is not merely what it is at the moment when we look upon it, vast as it is, that humbles us before Niagara. Reflection unites the past and future, with the present, and adds to the sense of present immensity, the astounding notion of an unvarying, immeasurable existence. The same incalculable volume that rolls into the chasm before us, has rolled into it for unnumbered centuries, — will roll into it, unchanged by mortal revo-

lutions, while earth endures. Eternity seems linked with the dread spectacle, and imparts a majesty sublime. Here you can realize what the Cataract is. Here, you must be led to look "through Nature, up to Nature's God!" Approach the brink, and take in, in all its phases, the wondrous scene!

What are you looking at so attentively, my cousins? Oh! I see now what you mean. Those flying specks above the middle of the River below, are not, dear cousins, what you think. They are not flakes of white foam, thrown from the Fall, and kept eddying in the wind;—But gulls, floating on their long, curved wings, above the flood, watching for prey.

We will return a little way, descend to the River's side, and view this same scene from a lower point: And, what is more,—if our courage fail not, we will do a deed to be aye remembered, by ourselves at least—I cannot say "a deed without a name," for it is called "going behind the sheet." Stop, Charles! No punning, I beseech you! Leave that to those who have contracted the habit, and cannot shake it off! Not a word, I pray you, about damp sheets, or having a wet blanket over us!

This house of entertainment is by the staircase, and here we get a guide. Go with this woman, Lily, and Charles and I will follow our host, to doff our clothes, and don something more fitting for the adventure we're bent on undertaking.

Why, Lily! is this you? I know this is Charles, because I saw him dress; but, a glimpse in the glass has almost made me doubt my own identity: "Am I myself?" as the little woman with the shortened petticoats naively inquired! Nothing is shortened about any of us. We're every way enlarged, with oiled cloth, india-rubber, and tarpaulin. Bless us, Charels! how you rattle when you move! And Lily, you look like a little, rosy, dumpy, Dutch butter-woman, only not near so respectable in your appearance. You are, both of you, shapeless as unlicked cubs,—and I would be ashamed of you, had I not also experienced a similar sad change. Pot and kettle must not bandy epithets,—so at least the saying runs. So, we'll descend the winding stairs at once. They're in the rear of the house. Lead on, good guide!

Here we are, at the foot of the Fall, beneath the rock on which we stood but a few minutes since. Look up!

We overhung the abyss, sustained by that thin, jutting ledge. At distant but uncertain periods, huge fragments of that impending rock drop thundering down, and shake the whole country round about for miles. Thirty years ago a mass that measured one hundred and sixty feet in length, by thirty in width, fell from the cliff at midnight, startling the inhabitants. The shock was mistaken for an earthquake. This path, based on fallen stones, and thirty or forty feet above the river, follows the wall of rock, and leads you to the Cataract. Place yourself, Lily, between the guide and me, and follow, Charles! Cling to the chain, and fear not! We'll venture in!

What miserably wet creatures we are! Let us hasten up, and resume our own apparel. I'm sure, that, with the water I've imbibed, I weigh a ton. Don't stop, Lil, to wring your hair. You'll hardly pass for a fresh-water mermaid, in your present plight! Along with you!

Now, this is comfortable. Here we are, in our own, dry clothes, strolling along towards the Clifton House, all the better for our descending. That guide was a clever fellew, Lily! How kind he was!—how careful

TABLE ROCK, FROM BELOW. P. 153

of your safety! Tell me, cousins, what you saw! Come, come, describe it all for me!

Your accounts are certainly very brief. You went on a narrow ledge twenty feet high, along the face of the rock, for a short distance, holding tightly to a chain which was fastened to the wall. On one hand was the precipice;—on the other, a thick descending sheet of water. In the cavern thus formed, was what seemed a dim, but yet sufficient light. But, torrents of water dashed on you from above,—the Fall thundered—the conflicting winds howled around you at every step, and hurled with fury the almost solid spray into your faces; and, as we crawled along the face of the tall cliff, like insects on a temple, your senses were all confounded,—your ears were filled with confused noises, and you saw nothing, or nothing clearly. Truly, my cousins, I'll note this—write it in my memorandum book. I'm proud of you, and particularly of Lil, who looks "like a beautiful rose, lately washed by a shower." I have read minute and elaborate descriptions of marvellous things seen and heard behind the sheet; but, although I have been there three times, I have never been able to realize them. You have given me, in brief, as full and

perfect an account, Lil, as I could write. I never saw more there than you have told, save that, once, I found and captured in the path, an eel.

How did it get there, indeed? I was about saying it walked there, but correct myself in time;—it got there the way you say we moved along the rock,—it crawled there. Where did it come from? From the sea, a thousand miles away! Why did it come there? It came there in pursuance of a law implanted in its nature, by an all-wise Creator. I'll try to explain it to you.

There are many fishes who are ever migrating between fresh and salt-water; and they seem to resort to the former principally to lay their eggs, which are as small as a pin's head, and very numerous, and are called spawn. The parent fishes pay no attention to the eggs when laid, save sometimes covering them with sand or pebbles. They leave them to their fate. When the spawn is hatched, the young, or baby fishes, must take care of themselves. So they venture not at first into the salt sea, but remain in the river of their birth, until they've attained a respectable size, and then they go in schools to the great ocean. The next year they ascend their parent stream to lay their eggs, and having done

so, return to the sea, after a short sojourn. The salmon, the shad, the herring, the striped bass, and many other fishes, do this. The eel also pursues the same course, with this differece, that, instead of laying eggs or spawn, it brings forth its young alive. Of fishes which live only in fresh water, many act similarly;—many kinds go from lakes and ponds into their tributary rivers,—or from the rivers up the little brooks that feed them, to deposit their eggs. This law of Nature is most beneficent to man;—for it brings within his reach a valuable portion of his food, which would else be almost inaccessible. It would seem to be a point of some importance, with the fishes, to ascend as high as possible. You have read of Salmon-Leaps—places where that luscious fish is taken in vast quantities. They are low falls, over which, in ascending the stream, the salmon leap or throw themselves by great exertion; and not unfrequently repeated efforts are made, before a lusty fish surmounts the fall and reaches the pool above. So with the eels. They come up from the sea in the spring, and persevere day and night in travelling, and sometimes e'en reach mountain ponds. They force themselves through the fiercest rapids, penetrate fissures and

holes in dams, and, when they find an obstruction they cannot surmount in the water, they'll even come out upon the land, and glide around it, like snakes. They pass through the whirlpool, and attempt the Falls. But nothing can ascend or overleap them,—and these tall precipices cannot be scaled;—and so it happens that eels are sometimes found, with other visitors, behind the sheet.

CHAPTER XIV.

VIEW FROM THE CANADIAN CLIFF — THE FERRY — THE FISHERMAN — THE NIGHT HAWK — PROJECTED IMPROVEMENTS — ICE BRIDGES.

We will sit down a while, by the road-side, at the top of the cliff, while the fast-sinking sun gilds the American shore, and the shades of evening are already gathering around the ferry-house below. In fifteen minutes stars only will give light to this sombre scenery. There, on the rock, still sits our fisherman. His form is plainly visible, though it is diminished to a pigmy size by the distance, and will soon begin to grow indistinct in the decreasing day. Do not laugh at him, my cousins! The angler's employment may seem idle, and thoughtless, to those who know him not: but I've read Izaac Walton's delicious book, and, though I angle not, I cannot denounce, or lightly ridicule those who do: What one does, is of very little consequence; but the

spirit in which it is done, whatever it may be, and the results obtained from it, are the things of moment. Two men, with extended arms, look up to heaven :— One silently curses his own birth ; and one from a pure heart, prays for his enemies. Two men read the same holy book : — One with reverence, and one to extract matter to sneer and cavil at. One man angles, merely to kill time, or to catch fishes, and boast of his success : — Another angles, partly to exert a skill he has acquired by some study and patient practice, but principally, because he loves to see God's goodness as exhibited in Nature, and delights in the society and scenes with which his not ungentle art acquaints him, Our angler may be simple or wise;—a mere time-slayer, or an embryo poet ; an oaf, or a philosopher ;—we cannot judge him merely by his employment. He may catch and carry home naught but some pike and eels ; or he may imbibe a true poetic, or a religious feeling, and conceive a train of thought, which will flash upon the world hereafter, and delight and elevate mankind. But our man, whatever he may be, has faded away in the dark shadow, and we'll speculate about him no more.

Now the lights flash up from the Ferry-House. The evening is damp, and rather chill; but I'm somewhat fevered, and love the moist air that kisses and cools my temples. Draw your shawl closer, Lily; and button up your coat, Charles! That twanging noise, like the strong jarring of a single harp-string, was made by a night-hawk, wheeling high in the air above us. He'll soon descend to hunt for flying insects near the earth.

I love the Falls. They are pleasant at all seasons, to say naught of their grandeur. And yet I often think that we cannot estimate them, as did the men who viewed them a century ago, in all their native wildness. There is a charm in first discovery, which none but discoverers can feel: There is much, too, in the freshness, real or fancied, of virgin Nature, as we term it,—of the earth's surface, ere man's foot has beaten paths, or his untiring arm changed its appearance. The descriptions Columbus gave of the New World, were rapturous: They cannot be equalled by any of our age. When he sprung upon the shore of the new-found land, and prostrated himself upon his face, and kissed the ground, a sober ecstacy reigned in his soul, which no other visitant of the same scene could ever know. One

hundred and nearly seventy years ago, there stood on the American cliff, opposite where we sit, an armed man, with a stern, grave face, which had been scarred in battle; and, by his side, a thin, but unbowed priest, clothed in black robes, — a Roman Catholic Missionary, — leaned upon a staff surmounted by a cross; while, a little in advance, a tawny Indian pointed with his finger, towards the Horse-shoe. Then the whole country was clad with a deep forest; — not a sign of human habitation was visible; — the white-man had not hung his path against the precipice, nor bridged the stream above; — wolves howled in the wood behind them, and eagles screamed from their eyries on Iris Island, and soared in the heavens above. These men had made a toilsome, dangerous journey, to attain this point. They had suffered much in reaching it. They experienced the deep, exulting feeling discoverers must experience; and they beheld a nobler scene, and, I doubt not, but that the Sieur de La Salle, and Father Hennapin, felt more, and more deeply, than you or I, or any of the ten thousand people who have trod the same spot this year.

I may be wrong, but the Niagara of our day, and the Niagara of two centuries ago, must, in my judgment, have been quite as dissimilar, as the tamed elephant, and the great Mastodon. We cannot destroy its grandeur. The precipice, and the descending waters need no accessories to render them sublime. But I could wish the banks of the river below had been left as rugged and as stern as Nature made it. I like the improvements the white-men have made—or rather I enjoy the convenience of those improvements; but dislike the things themselves as parcels of the scenery. Your bridges, staircases, hotels, and roads, are all capital in their way, and I am thankful for them;—but I would that they could be kept entirely out of sight, when we are roaming near the Cataract. There is no end to these improvements. People will not be content, I fear me, until they've introduced here everything which is deemed promotive of comfort in travelling, and everything which is in vogue for amusement elsewhere. They have carved another carriage road from the brow to the foot of the precipice, on the American side, and are building a steam ferry-boat to cross the river in. I could almost wish it would burst its boiler on the first

essay. I presume they'll soon have a fantastic fountain, like that of the Park in the city of New-York, throwing up a splendid column of water, thirty feet in height, and playing, when the reservoir will permit, on Table-Rock.

I am, I confess it, unreasonable, just now, my cousins. I am, as I told you, somewhat feverish, Lily! It is nothing of consequence, my dear—merely a little indisposition. I exerted myself somewhat too much to-day under the warm sun, upon the unsheltered rocks.—Pshaw! I can't conceal it much longer; and I'll tell it now. I am not sick, cousins, but cross, if you please, from disappointment. I am as hearty as a middle-aged bachelor can well be: but, this morning I received a most vexatious letter, from which I anticipate being recalled to-morrow. I am warned, that, on a certain contingency, which seems almost inevitable, the interests of our firm will require me to take a long journey, and to start forthwith; and am advised that the next mail will bring final intelligence. I had hoped to ramble with you, my cousins, by land and water, form any weeks; and to explore with you the wondrous, beautiful Niagara, from end to end, and tell you all its tra-

ditions, and relate some of the great deeds, and sad events, which have transpired upon its banks. And now, I'll have to tear you from the very midst of your enjoyment, and return you to your hot home. It is too bad! I am not altogether selfish in the matter,—and I will be cross, and abuse steamboats, and anything and everything which does not suit my humor.

You are good children, and I doubt whether your own kind parents love you more than I do. You bear this disappointment nobly—better than I. You have a Christian soul, Lil—thanks to your blessed mother's teachings! It is, as you say, our duty to be thakful for the goods we have enjoyed, which are but God's free gifts. We are brutal, if we, the creatures of His bounty, cannot bear, without murmuring, the little ill He has mingled with our many blessings. Let us not be like the beggar you mention, Charles! who received, without thanks, your daily sixpence for seven days, and cursed you on the eighth because you then withheld it from him, to give it to the poor woman with the sick babe. Still, I am very sorry. But perhaps I'm wrong in taking it for granted, that to-morrow we must return. There's hope yet—though it is slight indeed: But,

slight as it is, we'll cherish it, enough at least to make us cheerful, and prepare us, if it shall be extinguished, to be thankful still.

What a persevering chit you are! I tell you, Lily, I've made up with you, and will kiss you thrice in token of it;—and I am at peace with everybody and everything, excepting always that plaguy steamboat. What right has it to come up, almost under the Falls, with its ridiculous show of pretension, like a vulgar, bedizened woman in a noble withdrawing-room! Up it will paddle, to disturb the solemnity of the scene, with its ridiculous appearance, and its steam-pipe coughing feebly, like a worn-out stage-horse. Pshaw! I will not be at peace with it!—Well, well! I suppose I am unreasonable, dear Lil! I can hear that rascal, Charles, laughing at an animated argument upon the matter. I am foolish, I suppose: But, like all elderly gentlemen, I dread innovation. It is an old infirmity of mine,—this raising objections to every change about the Falls. I demurred to almost every project of the kind in my time; and, had I been here, would have protested against the abandonment of the old Staircase, for the more commodious one on the American side, which has

just been replaced by a new one. What old staircase, say you? Why, a cedar tree, which reclined against the rock, and adown which, not only men, but ladies descended the precipice, using the broken limbs for steps. But I am perfectly reconciled to the staircases. As soon as a change is made, and I have complained a little, I begin to perceive a propriety in it. When the Steamboat is fairly in operation, I presume I'll find it to be a great improvement, and perhaps regard it as in keeping with the scenery, and laud it accordingl.

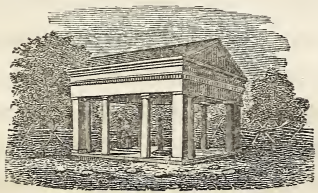
How very dark it is in the gulph below! How feebly the thinly-sprinkled stars glimmer in the firmament! A hazy, phosphorescent light, gleams from the American Fall, and marks its position; but the opposite shore is utterly undistinguishable. We'll not go in quite yet, but I'll tell you one more of the wonders bright winter achieves in this dear scene.

The bays and still rivers of Lake Erie, unlike the rushing Niagara, are conquered and enchained by frost, which binds them down by ice about two feet thick. In the spring, the warm sun melts the snow, and rain falls heavily, and freshets follow—that is, the streams rise, and overflow their banks, and hurry their broken ice

into the Lake. The ice of the bays and shores are dashed into pieces by the winds and waves, — and the whole Lake is covered with large fields of floating ice, which, in part, is gradually wasted by the returning warmth, and in part is drawn by the current, or driven by the wind into the Niagara, whose surface is sometimes for weeks crowded with fragments hurrying to the Falls. The River below is narrower than it is above them, and hence I mention it in passing, — a rise of one foot in the river above, caused by the west wind, will raise it many feet below the Cataract. Now when the ice is forced down in large quantities, and the cold is intense, it sometimes happens, that an ice bridge is formed between Iris Island and Canada. The floating fragments in the opposite eddies are first frozen into firm masses, extending from the shores towards each other, — and other blocks of ice, as they float down, between, become entangled, and frozen to, and so extend them, until they meet, and form a low bridge. The pieces which are then brought down, are stayed by, and joined to this bridge, or forced under it, and raise it up, until, by such accessories, it is sometimes reared to a height of thirty feet above the stream. My recollec-

tion is, that a cube of ice sinks two-thirds of its height in the water: And so such a pile as this would measure ninety feet from top to bottom, — and has been known to extend from near the foot of the Canadian Fall, for two miles down the river, affording free passage to all who choose to cross it.

But now we will go in: And, if you are not too sleepy, or tired of my stories, I'll tell you, as well as I can remember it, what seemed to me, when I was a tendr-hearted boy, a very sad tale, connected with the Falls. It will suffer somewhat in the telling, I presume; for I read it when I was very young, in verse, and the rhyme has all escaped my memory.



CHAPTER XV.

KOSHOKO AND NEHAWA, AN INDIAN TALE. CONCLUSION.

I'll take the middle of the sofa, if you please, with a little cousin on either hand. "You that have tears to shed, prepare to shed them now!" Stop smiling, Charles, or I'll send you story-less to bed! I will not vouch for the perfect truth of the melancholy tale I am about to tell; but, that it is as true as the History of the Crusades, I will maintain. It certainly is as probable as the history of Nero and Leander. But I am like a prancing horse,—always seeming to go, but never starting. Now, I will commence, that's poz!

In the seventeenth century, when the French, having obtained firm footing in Canada, had established trading posts on Lake Ontario, and were beginning to send to the Upper Lakes their hunters and voyageurs, to trap

the beaver, and exchange trinkets for furs,—a strong and warlike Indian Nation occupied the land adjoining the Niagara. One of their principal villages, consisting of rude huts, or wigwams, was situated on the Chippewa Creek, which empties into the River but a short distance above the Rapids. Their frail dwellings have long since disappeared; but here and there small mounds of earth remain, which when opened by the white man, disclose the bones of this dead race, and, intermingled with them, the beads and coarse ornaments they prized in life. I am not sure whether this people were of the Eries, Kah-kwas, or Hurons. I leave such questions to be decided by the antiqurian;—but, of this I am confident, that a more skilful huntert or a braver warrior, than Koshoko, was never of that tribe,—and that, of all its maidens, in Indian eyes a, least, Nehawa was the loveliest and best.

The tribe's policy was mainly swayed by an old chief, whose name has been lost to us, but whose traditionary fame survives. How unsatisfactory such fame seems! Naught but his deeds remembered, and they dimly, and the man's name forgotten! But, what would a name be, uncoupled with great acts, or more

illustrious endurings? The name seems to keep something of the individual in the world—but does it so? What is Cæsar's fame? He is utterly vanished from the world, and no one knows aught of him, but his mere name, and some deeds, perhaps untruly written. We cannot conjure with that name, and call back into this breathing word, the living man. He has gone forever. If he be blissful now, he joys not in the fact that his name is still in being in the world, or that the deeds he did are still remembered,—but that he did great deeds, and God has made him happy. This old chief perhaps was great as Cæsar, and perchance is happier now, though not in the hunting grounds his simple Indian creed reserved for those who acted well their part in life. He was as advocate of peace, and, through his prudence, his tribe were seldom at war;—but he had resented injury, and chastised in several battles, the neighboring nations, who mistook his love of peace for fear. He was jealous of the encroachments of the French, but deemed them irresistible as yet. He thought indeed that the Great Spirit might interpose, in person, with his thunderbolts, as he once did against the Mammoth, according to tradition, and

drive these strong intruders from the land he had bestowed upon his weak red children: But, to obtain this grace, he deemed it necessary that they should pray continually to the Great Spirit, and commend themselves to his protection, by pure lives and holy deeds, and especially by utter abstinence from the white man's fire-water, as they termed the ardent spirits, or brandy of the French. Here, and here only he played the despot. He would not permit it to be drunk by any of his people, and inveighed against it at every council.

Koshoko had brought home scalps from the wars, and once had led a war-party in a successful fray. He had spoken modestly, and as the old chief said, wisely, in council; and not a drop of fire-water had he ever tasted, though often tempted. The tribe regarded him as the sure successor of the old chief;—he was their pride and hope. He built a wigwam, and marked out a field for corn. But no corn grew in Koshoko's field, and, no sweet bird sang in the cage he had constructed. He was a great hunter, and a most skilful fisherman. No one slew more wild deer than he;—black bear skins were piled up in his wigwam;—and, from his

war-club, were suspended the ratling claws of a grisly bear, the trophies of a victory he had hardly won in a single combat with that dread animal, far in the west. And then he paddled his canoe so gracefully, as he speared the huge Mascalonge in the clear river, or chased the flying bass to the very verge of the rapids, struck it, and turned exulting from the imminent danger, avoided only by a paddle's length.

Koshoko loved. He laid deer after deer at the entrance of Nehawa's hut, and tied a spotted fawn before it. His presents were not rejected,—the two had been seen talking in the woods together,—and all the world said it was a match,—and that Nehawa would soon plant Koshoko's corn-field, and make his moccasins. But Indian love, save in great emergencies, proves itself only by kindly acts. Koshoko consulted no one,—Nehawa had no confident,—and yet their union was considered by the whole tribe, a settled thing:—And they did love each other as warmly, and devotedly, as any lovers who ever lived in any country of the world. Their sky was bright and promising; but, alas! a cloud too soon deformed it, and shot storm and death from its black bosom.

Small parties of the French had frequently stopped at the village, to rest or traffic, on their way to and from the more western wilderness; and the Indians had become somewhat used to French grimace, and the sound of the merry violin,—and, unfortunately, to the sight of men, senseless and staggering with liquor. The blue beads these traders brought, were, to the Squaws, precious as diamonds to a dutchess;—a knife was very valuable;—but vermilion would have brought its weight in gold, if they had had it;—and a little mirror, but half as large as Lily's tiny hand, was worth a pack of beaver skins. These men lived an adventurous and most exciting life, and made huge profits, not for themselves, but their employers. They were liberally paid, but all they got they wasted in gauds, and rude magnificence of dress, which made them splendid in their own eyes. Improvident as sailors, they spent all they earned, as fast as they earned it. They were great favorites with the copper-colored belles, whom they frequently took to wife. Indeed, such a match was considered high advancement for a squaw, for thereby she obtained a profusion of tinsel

ornaments, and took precedence of the village rabble of warriors' wives.

Among these visitors, the merriest and most admired was one whose name has perished: Would that he had perished too, ere he crossed the path of our poor lovers. He was a strong, skilful, brave trapper. But, his passions were lawless; and, though he was ever the merriest of the merry, he was as bloody and remorseless as a panther robbed of her young. "He could smile, and smile, and be a villain."

He spoke the Indian tongue, and had sometimes hunted with Koshoko, and called him friend: Good reason for it, too; for the Indian had twice saved his life at the hazard of his own. He had cast his regards on Nehawa; and, although he knew she was betrothed, according to the Indian custom, to Koshoko, he had determined to win her. He sought to gain her ear; but she would not listen to his gallantries, and even turned coldly away. He plied her parents with presents; but when his object was discovered, they would receive no more; for they thought it would be far happier for Nehawa to wed the chief man of her tribe, than to marry the rich, gay trapper. Koshoko heard of these

things, and his blood boiled; but his face was calm and grave as the full moon. He would not doubt his loved one.

The Frenchman came one day to Koshoko, and offered to sell him some ornament, the nature and name and uses of which, are not preserved in the tradition; but, as the sequel shows, it was most costly. The price he put upon it was beyond the utmost sum of the young chief's then store of furs, and he asked his friend to take what he had, give him the gew-gaw, and wait until the next hunting season was over, for the balance the balance of his demand: But the Frenchman said he cared but little about selling it, and in fact intended it as a present for his squaw, — the one he'd make his squaw: And so they parted. The traitor sought out Nehawa, and found her alone, and forced her to listen to him. He told her of the wondrous wealth he'd lavish on her, if she'd be his; and the gay and unlaborious life she'd live in the free west. She told him she had seen a deep, scarce-closed scar on the forehead of Koshoko, and asked him if he knew how it came there. Then the villain felt that she loved Koshoko beyond all price; for he remembered that that wound was made

when the young chief thrust himself between him, fallen, and a dying bear: And in his heart, he swore he'd have revenge. He persuaded her to take the trinket, as a proof of his regard for Koshoko, his friend, her all-but-husband, and left her. But a few minutes after Koshoko saw the maiden wearing the ornament, and fury reigned in his breast. He sprang into his canoe, and lauuched into the river; but seeing the Frenchman on the bank, he paddled it again to land, and moored it a few rods above the rapids. The smiling Frenchman met him with extended hand, and, after a little while, they sat down together, and conversed; and then the white man drew forth a bottle, and put it to his lips, and passed it to the red man, who pushed it back untasted. And then they talked again, — and again the bottle was offered to the Indian, who took it, and drank of its accursed contents. But why detail the lamentable particulars! Before long, Koshoko staggered to the brink of the swift river, and, with a drunken yell, fell into the canoe. Nehawa heard that yell, and saw her lover fall, and came towards him. The false Frenchman met her, and strove to bear her away by force, to his birch-bark boat, which lay ready in the creek; but

she burst away and fled to wake her powerless protector. The villain, mad with passion, and fearing the fierce revenge of the bold chief, rushed after, passed her, and with tremendous force urged the canoe into the stream. Then might have been heard a shriek that would have waked the dead; but her chief still slumbered uneasily. The boat flies towards the rapids, but faster still flies love, shouting in agony. It's all in vain! The little craft rocks in the rapids, darts like an arrow down the first shelf, pauses a moment, and then renews its speed, and Koshoko still sleeps: Will nothing wake him? Ha! he wakes, and raises himself, and, at one glance, sees all,—the foaming water—the traitor still standing on the shore, aghast at his own foul deed—the maiden running by the river-side! Instinctively he grasps and rears the paddle in his hands; but, in an instant, sees it's all in vain to strive with the indomitable current,—and so he tosses it into the flood, and seats himself as calmly as though he waited the coming of his bride, and gazes at her as she outstrips Camilla. O! what a fearful race was that! She runs at disadvantage, for she must describe a long curve round Cynthia Island, and cross a deep ravine! But, what will

not love perform! A full minute before the chief reaches the fatal brink, she lights with a bound on Table-Rock, and, at once fixed like a statue, with outstretched arms, awaits him. Down he comes, with his hand waving towards her, and his eyes fixed lovingly upon her, till he is brought to the very edge: But, they part not so; for, at the very instant he passes the verge, she leaps to meet him, and the abyss receives them both together!

Good night, dear Cousins! May your slumbers be light and dreamless, or full of happy dreams: And may the morrow bring news that will enable us to stroll yet more amid these scenes, as yet, not half explored.

TO THE READER.

[In the absence of Cousin George, the publisher would state, that he hopes, in a very short time, to present to his readers, from the same pen, a history of the rambles of the party down the Niagara River, from the foot of the Falls to Lake Ontario; interspersed with many of the old traditional legends in relation to this highly romantic spot, and containing accurate descriptions of the Whirlpool, Devils Hole, Scenery, &c., &c.]