I am nothing! The cataract seems a consecrated place, surrounded and filled with the majesty, and glory, and power of the Eternal; and the spot on which you stand sacred to his service. Fear, awe, and reverence are emotions which this sublime scene never fails to inspire. The God of the Universe is felt to be almost visibly present; and the haughtiest of Earth’s haughty ones, here tremble and adore.

From the Prospect Tower,—a round stone building, forty-five feet high, ascended by winding stairs, which was erected in 1833 by Judge Porter,—you have a magnificent view of the great Fall, the chasm, the rapids, Table Rock, and the surrounding scenery. You can look down into the very hollow and midst of the vast cascade, and almost see the elemental chaos, where the mist, the spray, the foam and thunder of the cataract have birth. Majesty, grandeur, sublimity, and beauty,—the glorious garniture of God,—are here spread out before you.

When you have wondered and admired as long as you choose from these places, ascend the bank, rest a while, and return back to the Biddle Stair-case, which you passed on your way hither from the Hog’s Back.
afforded to the various scenes of interest at the foot of the island, which are among the most grand and curious in this region of wonder.

A steep declivity of about forty feet, rendered practicable by a rude, but strong flight of common steps, leads down to the head of the Biddle Staircase— as it is very properly called— which is in the form of a hexagon, enclosing triangular steps that wind spirally around a large and solid oak shaft, resting firmly on a durable foundation, and securely fastened to the rock at top. The steps are ninety in number, and the Stair-case about eighty feet high— from its base to the river, the descent is eighty feet, or from the top of the bank, one hundred and eighty-five feet. One of the finest places in the country for angling, is at this point of the river, where many varieties of fish are often caught in great abundance. It was here, that the celebrated Sam Patch made two successful leaps from a platform ninety-seven feet high, in the fall of 1829, shortly after the Staircase was completed. This daring, but unfortunate individual, subsequently made two leaps at the Genesee Falls, from a still greater elevation; the last of which, from a height of one hundred and twenty-five feet, proved fatally disastrous. He was seen no more.

From the foot of the stair-case, well-worn paths lead up to the British Fall, where a most beautiful and awe-inspiring scene is witnessed; and down to the Central Fall, and the Cave of the Winds, where views, if possible, even more grand are beheld.

At the Biddle Stair-case, the visitor is provided with a suitable dress by Mr. Smith,—a worthy and well-informed gentleman, perfectly familiar with the Falls, and both competent and willing to impart any information that may be desired on the subject—who has for sale the usual curiosities, canes, and refreshments, and who, for a small fee, furnishes the traveller with every thing necessary to enable him to pass behind the sheet, and into the Cave of the Winds. No change of dress is required, if the visitor does not wish to penetrate the regions of spray, and of course no charge is incurred. But these scenes should never be overlooked:—they are full of wonder and sublimity.

Properly equipped, you descend the stairs, from the head of which you have a noble view of the Horse-shoe Fall; and pass up the stream to the grand cascade. This course is advised, because, usually, a person gets so thoroughly drenched in the Cave of the Winds, that dry clothing is an
object of immediate desire, and it is therefore best to visit that place the last, before a change of apparel. As you advance along the pathway at the foot of the cliff, with the vast mass of ragged rocks impending above your head, and, apparently, threatening instant destruction, it will be strange if you do not feel a deep sense of danger. Innumerable pieces of stone seem as if on the very point of tumbling down; and all around you lie the broken fragments that at different times have fallen. But there is little fear:—among the thousands and tens of thousands of persons who have sauntered along the path you are treading, not one has been injured. Only a single accident of the kind is known ever to have occurred, and that happened near the Central Fall.

You approach the foot of the cataract, and look up at the high over-hanging cliff, the Terrapin Rocks, almost poised upon the dizzy brink, and the far-falling torrent, that comes plunging down, dashed to foam and spray on the huge masses of lime-stone, that lie heaped around, having evidently been torn from the verge of the precipice, far above you. A splendid, though but partial view of the British Fall may be obtained from the rocks at the river-margin below. About three-fourths of that sublime cascade, is then directly before you, stretching from Table Rock, across the heaving and foaming sea of agitation, which it walls with a flashing flood, in its huge and gigantic proportions. From the point just above you, the water falls in white, fleecy, incoherent columns, like tumbling masses of fresh-formed snow; light, feathery, and fanciful in its changing shapes, and lovely in its fleeting descent, as a fairy dream of delight. If the wind is favourable, you can pass some distance behind the sheet, and feel the sublimity of a scene, that sets description at defiance, and fills the soul with emotion.

From these displays of beauty and wonder, retrace your steps to the Biddle Stair-case, and,
leaving that behind you, pass on to the Central Fall. If not in too much haste, descend the sloping bank to the Lower Fishing-Rock—as a limestone mass, at the lowest point of the island-shore, is called,—from whence the best view of the American Fall is presented, that can be any where obtained, unless, perhaps, from the river directly in front of it. The whole beautiful cascade hangs like a flashing curtain of shifting snow-wreaths before you, waving in fleecy folds, and pillared by downy columns of the softest, clearest white; around and over all of which, a genial glory seems to float, bright and pure as the hope and faith of an angel-choir. The scene is lovely beyond all conception. Nothing on earth can compare in that respect with the American Fall, as seen from this spot. Vast as it is, you do not observe its size; lofty as it is, you take no note of its height; august as it is, you scarcely perceive its grandeur;—its surpassing loveliness, and transcendant beauty, alone seem to engage your attention. Finally, however, all these become blended together, and you begin to realize the majesty, as well as the loveliness; the sublimity, as well as the beauty of this incomparable cascade, and to feel that the power as well as the goodness of the Divine Architect, has here its

tasting and visible impress. Long will that glorious scene live in your memory, hallowed by the recollection of a holy rapture, and an earnest worship.

Reascend the sloping bank to the Central Fall, and the Cave of the Winds is before you. At the entrance, you pause to look up at the projecting cliff, and the sparkling torrent that shoots off far above, falling far over, and far below you; and down at the piles of rock heaped up around, and the foam and spray springing to light and loveliness from the rock-wave concussion. The mightiest throes give birth to the most beautiful things; and thus the rainbow was born of the deluge.

You are on the steps descending into the cavern. The majesty, the sublimity of the scene cannot escape your notice, and you will feel what I find it impossible to express. A wall of rock rises frowning on one side; the falling sheet arches the other. You see it leap from the cliff far above, and lash the rocks far below. You seem between two eternities, with a great mystery before you, whose secrets are about to be revealed. What a moment is this! From the vast cavern in to which you are passing, comes the sound of a thousand storms. You hear the mad winds raging around the walls of their
The spray falls thick around you, and, almost overpowered with intense emotion, you hasten on, descend the steps, reach the bottom, instinctively retire from the rushing waters, and, having gained the centre and back of the cave, pause to look around. You seem all eyes, all ears, all soul! You are in the sublime sanctuary of Nature; her wonderful and fearful mysteries are above, beneath, and around you. God is Infinite, you are nothing! this is His temple, you are His worshipper! It is impossible in such a place to be irreverent. The proudest, here is meek; the haughtiest, humble; and the loftiest, lowly. The sights and sounds that crowd upon your gaze, and fill your ears, will be remembered to the latest day of your life; nor will the emotions that swell your bosom, and thrill your very soul, be ever forgotten.

The Cave of the Winds has long been known, and by that name, than which none can be more appropriate. In 1834 it was first entered by Messrs. White and Sims, residents of the village, who landed from a boat at the foot of Prospect Island, and from thence effected an entrance, though with much difficulty. Since that time, it has been occasionally penetrated by the same approach; but it was not until the present season that a safe and easy passage was thrown open to
the traveller; and for this advantage the public is indebted to the liberality and enterprise of Judge Porter. It is now free to all who choose to explore its solemn shades.

This cave has sometimes been called "Ingraham's Cave," but the propriety of that name is very questionable; and even were it not, the gentleman most interested in the subject, "solemnly protests" against it. The appellation by which it is generally known, "Cave of the Winds," is much more suitable, and this name it will beyond all doubt retain. It is about one hundred feet wide, thirty feet deep, and over one hundred and thirty feet high. The bottom is composed of loose stones or shale, which have fallen from above, and slopes gradually down to the front, where it terminates in a precipice thirty-four feet high, from the water's edge. The sheet of water on one side, and the projecting rock on the other, form a natural and noble arch, combining every element of sublimity. The thick spray rolls along the floor, curls up the arching wall, and flies across the ceiling in ceaseless revolutions, keeping the air in constant agitation, and adding the roar of many winds to the echoing thunders of the cataract. It is a sublime, an awful place — fit temple of Jehovah! No language can describe, no

tongue express, and no pen record the solemnity, the grandeur, the sublimity of the scene, or the emotions which it excites.

Between the Central and American Falls, and at the foot of Prospect Island, there is a narrow vacant space, bounded and almost over-arched by the tumbling torrent, from which grand views are presented of these two cascades — that of the latter, is particularly fine. Here you may rest yourself, or ramble over the huge rocks, in the pure air, with the bright river and the blessed sky before you, and the dark rock above; and then pass under the American sheet as far as you desire, or dare. It is a frightful place, overwhelming in its gloom, grandeur, and sublimity; and there be few who have ventured far, though it is supposed possible to pass quite through and under the whole vast cascade. Returning hence, ascend the Biddle Stair-case, to the bank above, and resume your ordinary dress. Rest yourself here a short time, and then, proceeding up the river, make the circuit of the Island. Feast your eyes again as you pass the Horse-shoe Fall, upon its wondrous majesty, and beauty; take another look, if you desire it, from the Terrapin Rocks, Tower, and Bridge; and, re-ascending the bank, continue your walk along the wave-washed shore.
A short distance above the cataract, you will see where the Island has been much worn away by the action and encroachment of the river. The road once passed some rods to the right of where it now is, and has been cut off, as you will perceive, by the ever-wasting flood. Large trees, which grew not long since upon the firm earth of the Island, lie prostrate, with their branching tops in the deep stream, and their roots high upon the sloping shore. From the bank, here you have a splendid view of the rapids, and will observe the mighty torrent rolling down immense ledges, leaping and surging up high in the air, and wildly rushing and tossing about—a mad sea of commotion!

You will also observe part of the wreck of a large vessel lying in the stream nearly opposite this point. It is all that is now left of the Detroit, the flag ship of Capt. Barclay, which with other vessels, was captured in the naval victory achieved by Commodore Perry, on the 10th of September, 1813. It was brought down from Buffalo last season, to be sent over the Falls, but in passing the ledge above, was dismayed, and broken, and, disappointing the vast crowds collected to see it take the final plunge down the cataract, rested not far from where it now lies. Piece after piece has been torn off and carried away by the impetuous torrent; and, probably, by another spring, there will not be a fragment left of the noble vessel, that once sent its booming death-laden thunders over the trembling waves of Lake Erie, in a glorious strife for conquest and renown. But louder thunders than were ever its own, and a mightier strife than that in which it was engaged, accompany and cause its destruction. Fit end to its war-born existence!

A few rods further, and you come to a cluster of islands situated in the midst of the rapids which rage above, between, and around them. There are four of these Islands, though to appearance, but three. The nearest one is called Moss Island, from the quantities of moss that completely cover it, to a depth of from ten to fifteen inches. Between this and Iris Island, there is a beautiful cascade—a cataract in miniature—which affords one of the finest bathing places that could be wished. The outer islands are called the "Three Sisters," and are, as yet, inaccessible, though they might be, at a small expense, connected with each other, and with Iris Island, and would be desirable places of resort, from their seclusion, and the magnificent views they would present of the rapids, in which they lie.
At the head of Iris Island, you see the broad river spread out before you, like a shining sea; with Schlosser on the left, Chippawa far off to the right, and Grand, Navy, and other Islands in the dim distance above. It was here, and near the old log upon which you are probably now sitting, that visitors to Iris Island were landed from boats, before the bridge was built. Such was then the only mode of reaching it, and the passage required great care, skill, and exertion, and was of course expensive. The Island was therefore, at that time, a terra incognita to most persons—an unattainable object of intense desire. They could see that it was beautiful, that it presented grand views of the sublime cataract they had come from afar to behold; but alas! they could not set foot upon its velvet surface, repose beneath its shady groves, nor witness from its banks the marvellous glories that clustered around it, and in the midst of which it so sweetly slumbered. Happy traveller! you can pass on and off when you please, see all that it has to reveal, and ramble over and about it at your leisure. Visitors to the Falls now, enjoy advantages that would have been deemed visionary and impracticable in those days of infant or unborn enterprise.

Continuing your walk around the Island, you mark the commencement, progress, and wild violence of the American rapids, and accord them the meed of wonder and praise. At length you reach an old log house, with a low stone addition to the rear, now lone, dreary, and deserted. It was here that Francis Abbot, the Hermit of the Falls, for a long time resided:—of this singular and unfortunate individual, we shall elsewhere relate all that is certainly known.

On an elevated sandy part of the bank, about midway of the garden, there were formerly a number of small mounds, into which excavations were made, some years since, and human remains discovered. They had been buried in a sitting posture, and each individual had a separate grave. None of the skeletons were found perfect, and most of the bones crumbled to dust, on being exposed to the air, or coming in contact with the touch. No relics of weapons or ornaments were observed, and probably none had ever been deposited.
The memory of the age in which these people lived or perished, has passed away, and tradition is silent concerning their history or fate. That Niagara was held in a great degree sacred by the Aborigines is certain; and that some of them believed the home of the Great Spirit to be here, is unquestioned. Probably, Iris Island was, from these circumstances, a consecrated spot, where great and good men, who were loved and honoured while living, were permitted to repose when dead; and where also, the fair and innocent, who were cut down in the greenness of youth, and the bloom of beauty, were allowed to bear them company. But this is mere supposition, for nothing is or can be known of the persons here buried, or the time of their interment, except that it must have been ages ago. This is proved, by the condition of the bones, and the ignorance of all the neighbouring Indian tribes upon the subject. It is quite likely that the remains of many others are still resting in this holy burial-place, whose solemn dirge is sung by the cataract, and whose quiet sleep will be broken only by the Archangel's trump, at the end of time.

Having made the circuit of the Island, return to your hotel, dine, rest, and then pay a visit to the neighbouring dominions of the British Queen.