CHAPTER VII.


"The bale-fires flash on high, from rock to rock—
Death rides upon the sulphury Stier—
Red Battle stamps his foot, and Nations feel the shock."

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"Thy glories are sought till the life-throbb is o'er—
Thy laurels pursued though they blossom in gore,
'Mid the ruins of columns, and temples sublime,
The arch of the hero doth grapple with time:
The Muse o'er thy form throws her tissue divine,
And History her annal emblazons with thine."

EAVING Lewiston, and crossing the river in a boat, propelled by horse power, you land in her Britannic Majesty's dominions, at the village of Queenston, and ascend the heights, so memorable for one of the most desperately-contested battles of the late war, in which the American forces, finally lost a thrice-won victory, and were compelled to lay down their arms, and surrender at discretion; and the English sustained an irreparable loss in the death of General Brock, which no victory could compensate. He was killed by a musket ball, in the early part of the action, while cheering on the brave troops under his command. When struck, he was standing by a cherry-tree, still pointed out, in an orchard to the right, at the foot of the mountain-plain.

FERRY AT LEWISTON.

From the heights at Queenston, a similar but less obstructed, and therefore, more extensive view of the country, river, and lake, is presented, to that of the opposite elevation. From the top of the monument, nearly five hundred feet above the river-level, it was still more grand and comprehensive; but, considered as an observatory, that...
towering structure is among the things that were, having been nearly demolished by an explosion of gunpowder.

This monument, standing upon the most lofty point of Queenston Heights, was erected by the Provincial Legislature, to the memory of General Brock, whose remains were removed from Fort George, and deposited in its vault, with those of his Aid, Colonel McDonald, who was mortally wounded in the same action, and died the following day. In addition to its value as a work of art, it had other and stronger claims to respect. It was erected in honour of a good and gallant man, whose name and deeds form a part of the history of the times; and whose uniformly kind treatment of American prisoners—so very different from that of too many of his contemporaries—will ever be held in grateful remembrance by the American people. Wantonly to destroy such a monument, raised in commemoration of such a man, would be base indeed; but there was not wanting some wretch, infamous and despicable enough to be guilty of the outrage.

On the night of the seventeenth of April, 1840, the monument was blown up by some villain, or villains, unknown, and completely ruined. The stairs were thrown down, the shaft rent in several
places nearly from top to bottom, the inscription-
tablet fractured quite across, the key-stone forced
out, and the whole structure, in short, irremerdi-
ably injured. The damage was at first supposed
to be much less than the event proves it to have
sustained. In February of the following year, a
large portion of the top fell; and now, the dome
is entirely gone, the balustrade almost destroyed,
and scarcely a single part unbroken. The inte-
rior is a literal heap of ruins, and the ground
for many yards around, covered with the fallen
fragments.

This execrable transaction, has been attributed
to the notorious Benjamin Lett,—who is now in
the penitentiary, for an attempt to blow up the
steamer Great Britain,—but with what justice,
we are unable to say. Whoever did it, richly
deserves a short shrift and a strong halter; and
this we believe to be the sentiment of every gen-
erous mind. Any wretch, so depraved, as to war
against the ashes and honours of the dead, is unfit
to associate with the living.

From the heights of Queenston, passing along
up the river bank, you come, when a short dis-
tance below, and nearly opposite the Devil's
Hole, to a cove or gulf, something similar to that
gloomy chasm, but of much less magnitude. It is
however, dark and romantic, and quite secluded, and may be worth exploring to the river; a feat we have not yet, but intend soon, to accomplish.

About half a mile further, and you come again to the Whirlpool, of which, from the summit of the Canada Cliff, a capital view is afforded. The rapids entering this imprisoned sea, are almost directly in front; and those at the outlet, immediately below you. The view, is in many respects, better than that from the height opposite.

OUTLET OF WHIRLPOOL, CANADA SIDE.

Descending a long and tortuous, but neither difficult nor dangerous succession of steps and

TO NIAGARA FALLS.

slopes, to the foot of the precipice, you find yourself on a ledge of rocks, with the Whirlpool on your right, and the mad rapids plunging impetuously past you, through the narrow opening. The scene, from this point, is inconceivably grand and impressive, and one you should not fail to witness. Turning to the right, and carefully picking your way along the margin of this mighty basin, you may make the circuit of the Whirlpool, and get a better idea of its wild and terrible sublimity, than can be otherwise obtained. It is a long, and somewhat fatiguing walk, but the toil will be richly rewarded. Of the entering rapids,—surpassing in grandeur, in proportion to the breadth of the stream, even those above the cataract—you will thus get a near and most splendid prospect.

Having re-ascended the bank, follow it round the Whirlpool, crossing large ravines, and passing deep and thickly-wooded dells, till you reach Benackie Point, at the entrance to this maelstrom-wonder. Of all upper views of this vast sea of imprisoned waters, that presented to your look from this spot, is the most imposing and unique. The high-rolling rapids, rush along in savage grandeur, almost beneath your feet, but far, far below you; and the whole measure of the monster
abyss, heaving, surging, and circling in its wild agitation, confronts your eager yet half-recoiling gaze. Opposite, rises the gigantic, cloud-soaring cliff, from which you first saw the Whirlpool, with the sweet summer-house resting like a snow-wreath on its emerald summit; and parted from it by the narrow outlet, through which the escaping floods are bounding away, in the joy of release, from the dark valley of their confinement, stands the huge form of its twin-born companion, rearing its mountain brow to an equal elevation, inviting, as it were, the tempests' shock, and defying the storms of time and fate.

You can watch the circling currents, the plunging surges, the gorging and disgorging floods, see the entering and emerging torrents, and all the varied features of this strange, wild prison-place of raging waves; and if it does not impress you with a solemn awe, you must be less susceptible to strong emotions, than the many who behold and wonder at the scene, as we have often done. The sullen stillness, that seems to hover, pall-like, above this broad, deep basin; the black banks, that close darkly round, walling it in with massive, impenetrable, high-reaching barriers; the towering mountain-formed, dark-browed warders that guard its narrow portal; the wild floods rushing

in, and maddening at the toils by which they are enveloped; the prisoned volumes, winding round and round the sombre slopes by which they are enclosed, and thus weaving coils by which still-coming currents are ensnared; the mad contention that the struggling, jostling, angry masses meeting and battling, ever make; the raging torrents, crowding and driving through the lean and slender gateway, that leads to freedom,—these and many other strange and august appearances, conspire to fill the mind with astonishment, and the soul with awe. I do not envy the man, who can look upon such a scene unmoved; nor admire the apathy of his stoic gaze, who sees no dread in this sublime display, and feels no reverence for the Power that made its walls and waves. But, come——

A short distance above the Whirlpool, a small stream, called Muddy Run, a mere rivulet in its summer size, but increasing to a torrent force, when swoln by the falling rains and melting snows of autumn and spring, leaps down the lofty bank, and mingles its tiny volume with the heremad Niagara; which, like a wilderness of raging floods, dashes along in a wild career of rapids, on to its maelstrom-prison. The cascade formed by this little stream, is beautiful and unique. The
water falls in a brilliant, sparkling shower of silver spangles, and, flashing off from the rocks below, sends up its mimic clouds of spray, and the sheen of its twinkling specks of foam; and then, sliding down the black bank, like a beamy serpentine strip of sunlight, it is caught, swallowed up, and whirled away in the mighty rush of the rolling, roaring river, to which a thousand such diminutive creeks could add no perceptible increase.

The bank opposite this point, is precipitous from the water’s edge to the top, and presents no spot where the foot of man could find a resting place. It is bare and almost perpendicular, showing its various strata, and offering to the geologist a rare opportunity for scientific investigation, if not a rich field of research. Its naked aspect is slightly relieved by the diversified colouring of its component parts; and still more by the trickling rills that slip down its rocky surface, and ooze from between its leafy layers of changing consistency and alternate hue.

About one and a half miles above this, you come to Bender’s Cave, — sometimes called the Devil’s Den, — which is quite a curiosity, and must not be overlooked. It is about twenty feet below the top of the bank, and seems to be a natural hollow in the rock, in shape something like a large oven, and measuring about forty feet in breadth and depth. On the rocks, at the back of the cave, small quantities of sparry accretion have been formed; and in spots, an appearance of shining silver specks is presented, which, caused by minute particles of water, may be brushed away in its glistening beauty, by a touch. The floor of the cave is not of “pure white sand,” but is covered with a mixture of argillaceous and calcareous earth.

Above and below the cave, the rock is perpendicular; from its mouth, a noble view of the river and banks is afforded; and from the top of the bank, at the entrance to it, a beautiful, though distant and partial, view of the Falls may be seen. The cavern is dry, and sequestered; and, situated as it is, offers strong inducements to any anchorite who may desire such an abode. Hermits are invited to call and examine its accommodations; and it is hoped some one will make it his permanent residence, as such an inhabitant might add something to the romance of this wonderful region.

Having completed your examination of Bender’s Cave, follow up the bank of the river, admiring as you pass, the exquisite taste of the Canadian authorities, who, constructing a road along the bank to the Whirlpool, are cutting off
all the timber and underbrush, and leaving the bare cliff without a shrub to fringe its margin, and relieve or soften its naked grandeur. Strange ideas some people have of improvement:—they would spoil a star to make a spangle. O, that Morris might come and sing to them—

"Woodman, spare that tree,
Touch not a single bough,"

and thus arrest the unhallowed work of destruction.

Arrived at the Clifton House, congratulate yourself on having seen every foot of that astonishing channel, cut to such an amazing depth and through such a surprising distance, by the everlasting cataract of Niagara, and which is in itself, one of the greatest natural wonders of the material world. The works of Man are the playthings of Time; but these vast walls are the enduring pages of its history, and every stone in the chasm is a bead in the wampum of Ages!

Lundy’s Lane, and that "Meteor Hill," where the celebrated Battle of Niagara—miscalled by some, Bridgewater—was fought, are at Drummondville,—so named in honour of General Drummond, commander of the British forces,—and about three fourths of a mile northwest of the Falls. Most travellers desire to visit a place so memorable, and it is presumed the reader is not an exception. The road up the bank, in front of the Clifton House, leads directly to the battle-ground. A church, a tavern, and several other buildings, are on the hill, the possession of which was so obstinately contested; and one or two are yet standing, which were there at the date of the conflict. A walk through the burying-ground, on the left side of the ascent, will show where rest the remains of many a gallant soldier, who lost his life by the sad chance of war.

Returning from Lundy’s Lane, follow the upper bank to the Pavillion Hotel, from whence you have a fine view of the Falls. Observe the curious shape of the Horse-shoe curve, as seen from this point; and again, from the Barracks; and then continue your walk to Street’s Point, from which the most admired and magnificent view of the Canada rapids is presented. The mighty volume of water rolls by in all forms of commotion; plunging down immense and steep ledges, dashing against obstructing rocks, and springing high in the air; swelling here in huge billows, tumbling there in broken surges, raging and rushing on with inconceivable force and velocity towards the awful precipice, from which it is so soon to
be hurled. No art of language can do justice to this scene—it must be witnessed!

A small fragment of the river, bending deeply in just above this point, separates a round island, called Cynthia Island, from the main land, and also another small one at its upper extremity. Opposite Cynthia Island, on the south shore of the stream, is the Burning Spring. The water wells up in a barrel, and is kept in constant ebullition by the rising gas; which, on the application of a lighted candle, instantly ignites, and burns with a clear steady flame. On this spot, formerly stood the village and mills of Bridgewater, which, in the ravages of war did not escape destruction, and have left nothing but a name and a few deserted buildings, to show where once they flourished.

Chippewa is one mile above. It is a fine growing place, but was the head-quarters of McNab, in the Navy Island war, and suffered not a little from the stagnation of business, during the rebellion. It is also memorable for the battle fought near it, which resulted in the triumph of the American arms. The plain on which this celebrated contest took place, lies about two miles above, or south of the village, and is now covered with cultivated fields, and verdant meadows. It is however regarded with deep interest by the

people of both countries, and resorted to by many visitors to the Falls.

Extend your ramble to this plain, hallowed in the remembrance of two nations, return thence to the ferry, feast your eyes again upon the splendors and glories of Niagara, which you cannot too often behold; and then cross the river and rest from your labours of curiosity.

Reader,—I have thus, in part, performed my office of "guide:" indifferently well, it may be, but with an eye single to your advantage. I have conducted you to every part of Niagara, and to all that there is to be seen at the Falls, and in their immediate vicinity. I need not now say, visit every point again, and repeatedly, for your own inclinations will prompt you to do this as often as your term of stay and convenience will permit. You will desire to look upon the cataract at all hours of the day and evening; to see it in every light and under every shade; in storm and sunshine; and in fall and flood. And when you have done this, and are leaving Niagara, perhaps, for ever, you will regard the days and hours in which you listened to its solemn voice, and saw its fearful throes, as among the most delightful you ever
passed, unless in 'love's young dream' when every pulse was a thrill, and every thought a rapture.

But the duty of a Guide, is not merely to point out the path and lead the way, he should endeavour to direct your attention to every feature and appearance of the place to which he has led you, and unless indifferent to the beauty and sublimity of the marvellous scenes he has brought you to behold,—in which case he is a bore of the most intolerable description,—he will communicate his own impressions, in the language of his own enthusiasm, and this, if you do not sympathize with, you can at least, excuse. So far, I have done my devoir.

I am now about to gratify your curiosity as to the principal occurrences, historical and otherwise, not heretofore mentioned, connected by their vicinage, if not more immediately, with the wonderful cataract of Niagara, and the remarkable objects in its neighbourhood; that done, my whole task will be accomplished.

“These are events that should not pass away,
And deeds that claim redemption from decay,
And names that must not wither, but go down
To after ages.”