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BOOK OF NIAGARA FALLS.

IN these days of rapid travelling, when the most trifling delay is deemed a calamity, a few directions may be necessary, to enable you to save time, and view the various points of interest to the best advantage. At the same time we can not help deprecating the mania so prevalent at the present day, of making our excursions for pleasure, mere races against time. No person should come to Niagara, for the *first time*, and leave the same day; it is utterly impossible for one to conceive or realize its grandeur or beauty in such a visit—in fact one can hardly endure the bodily fatigue of simply climbing up and down the various stair-cases, hills, rocks, &c., much less can the mind take in and appreciate the various objects of interest which necessarily present themselves in such quick succession, when *endeavoring* to see the whole of Niagara in a day.

It is a common custom for visitors on arriving at Niagara, to hasten, immediately upon alighting from their

Directions to Travellers.

conveyance, to catch a first glimpse at the mighty cataract; and this view may in all probability be one of the least attractive—they feel disappointed—and wonder at the eulogium bestowed by other travellers, who have used more time and discretion, jump into the first car that leaves, and——praise the falls, *because every one else does*, not because they have witnessed or appreciated its beauties themselves!

Should you arrive on the American side, you will of course stop at one of the Hotels, of which the principal are the CATARACT HOTEL, kept by P. Whitney & Sons, and the EAGLE HOTEL, by C. B. Griffen & Co., both of which are excellent houses. After recovering in some measure from the fatigue of your journey, take the street to the right around either of the Hotels, and proceed a few rods, to the bridge that leads across the rapids to Bath and Goat Islands; you will stop at the toll-house on Bath Island when you pass over, record your name in the register and pay twenty-five cents, which entitles you to visit all the islands, with their appendages, as often as you please during your visit, or for the year, without any additional charge. And if you choose to cross in a carriage, you pay no more. Proceed next to Goat Island, where you will find guide-boards directing you to all the most interesting places and objects around the island. Follow the gravel walks at the right, down

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to the cascade or centre fall, and cross a narrow bridge to Luna Island, from the farther corner of which you will have the best and most splendid view of the falls on the American side. Retracing your steps to the gravel walk, proceed next to the Biddle Stair-case; *descend that without fail*, as you will there have a magnificent and much admired view of the two entire falls, standing between them, and an opportunity, if the wind be favorable, of passing a considerable distance behind either sheet, with the tremendous flood pouring over you from a height of 150 feet. From the foot of the stair-case, turn first to the right and go to the Cave of the Winds, under the centre fall, and in returning, follow the path to the great Crescent fall.

Reaching the top of the island again, proceed to the farther corner, where you will find the Stone Tower, forty-five feet high, with winding steps to the top, and also the Terrapin Bridge, from both which places you will have decidedly the best and most impressive views of the falls, that can be had from any position. Here you will realize power, grandeur, sublimity, immensity, —no pen or tongue can describe it.

Pursuing your way with a view to go entirely round the island, — as you ought without fail to do, inasmuch as you will thus get a much better view of the rapids and surrounding scenery than can be obtained any

Directions to Travellers.

where else, — you will proceed up to a beautiful cascade where, under the shelter in part of a projecting rock, you can have an opportunity to bathe in the sparkling foam of Niagara.

“This is the purest exercise of health,
The kind refresher of the summer heats.”

A rustic bridge was here to give you access to the Moss islands, which are well worthy a visit. Just above these islands you have the very best view of the rapids, that is presented from any place about the falls. Proceeding round the head of the island, you cross the place nearly opposite the saw-mill, where a number of human skeletons have been dug up, — supposed to be the former site of an Indian burying ground.

If your visit is protracted at the Falls, you should pass around and through Goat Island by the different paths in order to observe its picturesque beauty and realize its thousand attractions. You ought also, if time permit, to visit the site of old Fort Schlosser, the Mineral Spring, the Whirlpool, the Devil's Hole, &c., to all which places the coach drivers will conduct you, and give such information and directions as you may need.

In order to cross the river, proceed from the bridge to the stair-case, near the edge of the falls, at the foot of

Directions to Travellers.

which you will have a very near view of the highest fall and a most charming prospect of the entire falls.

“ Above, around, beneath, amazement all !
Terror and glory joined in their extremes ! ”

Take a look from the window of the stair-case and you will realize the truth of Shakspeare's description,—

“ How fearful
And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low !
I'll look no more,
Lest my brain turn and the deficient sight
Topple down headlong.”

In crossing the river, not the least danger need be apprehended ; it is a perfectly safe and most delightful excursion, and persons sometimes swim across without difficulty. The time occupied in crossing is ordinarily about eight minutes, and the ferriage is $18\frac{3}{4}$ cents, from May to November; and 25 cents from November to May. If you have trunks or other baggage to be transported from either side to the other, the ferryman will convey them safely, at a reasonable charge. The river is here 76 rods wide, and 250 feet deep.

Having crossed the river, you proceed up the bank by a carriage road, at the head of which stands the Clifton House: here you can refresh yourself, and proceed to—



American Street from foot of the Staircase.

 Directions to Travellers.

wards the Table Rock ; about half way between the Hotel and Table Rock, stands the very interesting MUSEUM of Mr. Barnett, which visitors should by no means fail to visit. This gentleman, (Mr. Barnett) has spent years in the collection of his museum, and an examination of its contents will amply prove that the time has not been spent uselessly. A more extended notice of this museum will be found at page 48. Proceed from the museum to Table Rock, where you will find a spiral stair-case, from the foot of which you can pass 153 feet behind the sheet of water. This stair-case is under the care of Mr. Starkey, who furnishes dresses and a guide for visitors who wish to go behind the sheet; he also keeps a reading-room, and a neat and inviting shop of refreshments. An examination of the Albums in the establishment of Mr. Starkey, will be found amusing, as well as interesting.

From Table Rock you have one broad and imposing view of the whole falls, and much of the scenery of the rapids and islands. It is generally conceded that this view, and that from the Terrapin Bridge, are the best, and combine more of the beautiful and sublime, than can be obtained from any other point on either side of the river.

In ascending the bank from Table Rock to the Hotels, you have a fine and extensive view of the surrounding

 Niagara River...Its Sources.

country, and can visit Lundy's Lane, Brock's Monument, &c., as you may have leisure or inclination.

If you arrive first on the Canada side, proceed directly to Table Rock, and when satisfied with viewing the amazing scene there, both from above and below, and have visited all the other objects of interest, follow the path to the Ferry, cross to the other side, and then visit Goat Island, as directed above.

To those who wish the services of a living guide in their rambles and excursions, Mr. S. Hooker, on the American side, offers himself; his house is near the Eagle Hotel. From a residence of twenty-two years at the Falls, he is enabled to conduct visitors to all the objects of interest, in the vicinity, and to give them much valuable information.

 NIAGARA RIVER, ITS SOURCES, AND ISLANDS.

Niagara river, upon which the falls are situated, receives the water of all the upper lakes, as Erie, St. Clair, Huron, Michigan, Superior, and a number of smaller ones. The most distant source of the Niagara is probably the river St. Louis, which rises 1250 miles northwest of the Falls, and 150 miles west of Lake Superior ;

Niagara River . . . Its Sources.

it is 1200 feet above the level of the ocean, and falls 551 feet before it reaches the lake.

Lake Superior is 459 miles long, by 100 wide, and 900 feet deep: it is discharged into Lake Huron by the Strait St. Mary, 60 miles in length, making a descent of 45 feet. This lake receives the waters of about forty rivers. Lake Michigan is 300 miles by 50, and about 900 feet deep, and empties into Huron, through the Straits of Mackinac, 40 miles in length. Connected with Michigan on the southwest side, is Green Bay, 100 miles in length by about 20 in width. Lake Huron is 218 miles by 180, and 900 feet deep, and is discharged into Lake Erie, through the rivers St. Clair and Detroit, 90 miles, making a descent of 31 feet. Lake Erie is 290 miles by 63, and 120 feet deep, and 564 feet above the level of the sea. It empties itself through Niagara river, 35 miles in length, into Lake Ontario, making a descent of 334 feet, viz: From the lake to Schlosser, 12 feet; thence down the rapids, 52 feet; the perpendicular falls, 164 feet; from the falls to Lewiston, 104 feet; and thence to Lake Ontario, 2 feet.

Lake Ontario is 180 miles, by 31, and 500 feet deep, and discharges itself through the river St. Lawrence, into the Atlantic Ocean, 710 miles distant.

The four inland seas above the falls—as the great lakes may properly be called—with the hundreds of

Grand and Navy Island.

rivers great and small, that flow into them, cover a surface of 150,000 square miles, and contain nearly half the fresh water on the surface of the globe. From these sources of the Niagara, some idea may be formed of the immense quantity of water, that is constantly pouring over the falls.

Niagara river, as it flows from Lake Erie, is about three-fourths of a mile in width, and from twenty to forty feet deep; for three miles it has a rapid current, and then it becomes calm and smooth till within one mile of the falls.

“So calm;—the waters scarcely seem to stray,
And yet they glide like happiness away.”

Five miles from the lake the river begins to expand till it becomes more than eight miles in width, measured across Grand Island, and embraces before it reaches the falls, about forty islands. Of these largest are Grand and Navy. Navy Island, belonging to Canada, contains 304 acres of good land, and terminates near Chippewa point. This Island has acquired some notoriety in consequence of being the resort, during the winter of 1837-8, of a large body of men, headed by William L. Mackenzie, whose object was a revolution in the government of Upper Canada. Batteries were erected upon the island, and considerable powder was burned in

 White Haven . . . Timber Company.

exchanging compliments between the island and Chipewa; but as far as we have learned, but one man was ever killed on the island. It was finally evacuated some time in January, 1838, and has since remained quietly in the possession of the British Government.

Grand Island commences five miles from the lake, is twelve miles in length, measured around its edge, and from three to six in width, and terminates three miles above the Falls, containing 17,384 acres. The land is well timbered, rich and productive. As the deepest channel of the river, forming the boundary line, runs on the west side, this island, until recently, belonged to the State of New-York; but in the year 1833, a company from Boston, purchased nearly the whole of the island, and have erected upon it, near the site of the famous Jewish city, Arrarat, (projected in 1825, by Major Noah, of New-York,) a steam grist mill, and a saw-mill, 150 feet square, containing 15 sets or gangs of saws. This mill is intended to furnish ship stuff of every description, from 20 to 70 feet in length, and is probably one of the most extensive establishments of its kind in America. The name of their village is "White Haven," situated nearly opposite Tonawanda, where the Erie Canal locks into the Niagara river. It is approached by a ferry across the river, here 100 rods wide, and has increased, since Nov. 1833, from one solitary

 Other Islands . . . The rise and fall of Niagara.

family to more than fifty; it has also many work-shops, a store, a school-house, a commodious wharf, several hundred feet long, and a spacious dock made of piles, for storing and securing floating timber.

In July, 1759, during the old French war, two large French vessels, in danger of being taken by the British, were burnt and sunk in what is called Burnt Ship Bay, near the lower end of this island. Some parts of them are still visible; and some years since, a party of men, by raking the river at that place, secured a number of tons of iron.

Among the other islands of the river, are Bird Island, between Buffalo and Fort Erie; Squaw Island, containing 131 acres, opposite Black Rock; Strawberry Island, containing about 100 acres; Beaver Island, of 30 acres; Rattle Snake Island, of 48 acres; Tonawanda Island, on which is the beautiful mansion of Stephen White, Esq., containing 69 acres; Cayuga Island, near the New York shore, four miles above the Falls, containing about 100 acres; Buck Horn Island, near the lower end of Grand and near Navy Islands, containing 146 acres; and a number of smaller islands, in and immediately above the rapids, besides Goat Island, &c., hereafter to be described.

One feature in the Niagara river somewhat peculiar is, that neither the snows of winter, nor the evaporation of

The Rapids.

summer, neither rains nor drought, materially affect it ; its waters flow on, full and clear, perpetually the same ; except, as has long been observed, they have a small gradual rise and fall about once in seven years. The cause of this is unknown, but is undoubtedly to be sought in something affecting the upper lakes. Indeed, it has often been asserted by travellers, that the lakes have septennial fluxes and refluxes ; it is also asserted by some that they have small diurnal tides. This however, may reasonably be doubted.

THE RAPIDS.

I must here apprise the reader, that it were vain to attempt a graphic description of the falls and surrounding scenery ; for they so immeasurably exceed every thing of the kind elsewhere seen or even imagined, that no power of language can give any adequate idea of them to those who have not been present to hear and see for themselves. Captain Basil Hall remarks, “ All parts of the Niagara are on a scale which baffles every attempt of the imagination, and it were ridiculous therefore, to think of describing it ; the ordinary means of description, I mean analogy, and direct comparison, with things

The Rapids.

which are more accessible, fail entirely in the case of that amazing cataract, which is altogether unique.”

“ All the pictures you may see,” says J. J. Audubon, “ all the descriptions you may read, of these mighty falls, can only produce in your mind the faint glimmer of the glow worm, compared with the overpowering glory of the meridian sun.”

These scenes which are sketched in the following pages, may be considered, therefore, only as a very faint outline, or shadow, of the reality.

Below the termination of Grand and Navy Islands, the river is compressed to the width of two and a half miles ; and pressing forward with accelerated motion, it commences, about three-fourths of a mile above the falls, a rapid descent, making within that distance a slope or succession of *chutes*, amounting to fifty-two feet on the American side, and fifty-seven on the other.—The tremendous and beautiful rapids thus formed, constitute a very important part of the grand and unparalleled curiosities of this river. Were they in any other place, they would of themselves be considered as a scene of great beauty and sublimity, equalled only by the ocean when lashed into foam and fury by the angry tempest. Many visitors express themselves more delighted, and unexpectedly filled with wonder, at seeing the rapids, than the falls themselves.

The Rapids . . . Roar of the Falls.

"Through sparkling spray in thundering clash,
The lightning of the water flash,
In awful whiteness o'er the shore,
That shines and shakes beneath the roar."

Two miles above the falls, in approaching from Buffalo, you come in sight of the white crested breakers, more than a mile in width, dashing, foaming, and tossing from ten to thirty feet above the main current; and at the same time hear a low, monotonous, tremendous roar; and as you approach nearer, feel a tremulous motion of the earth. The distance at which this roar can be heard varies, with the state of the atmosphere, ordinarily from five to twenty miles, though it is said to have been heard at Toronto, forty-five miles distant. And yet in the village near the falls, it is scarcely heard at all. The mist, arising like curling smoke, and separating as it rises into masses of fantastic clouds is seen at the distance of from three to twenty miles. This distance depends upon the state of the atmosphere, the height of the sun, and the force and direction of the wind. This mist sometimes rises in immense masses, and sometimes in a pyramidal shape to a very great height, and is an object of great curiosity, especially in the morning, soon after sunrise. It then sparkles like diamonds, and becomes illuminated with the most brilliant, prismatic colors.

Table Rock.

"Niagara! Niagara! I hear
Thy tumbling waters. And I see thee rear
Thy thundering sceptre to the clouded skies;
I see it wave—I hear the ocean rise,
And roll obedient to thy call. I hear
The tempest-hymning of thy flood in fear;
The quaking mountains and the nodding trees—
The reeling birds—and the careering breeze—
The tottering hills, unsteadied in thy roar;
Niagara! as thy dark waters pour,
One everlasting earthquake rocks thy lofty shore."

From Table Rock, you have an extensive and picturesque view of the rapids; but they are seen to still better advantage from the bank of the river, half a mile above. They are also to be seen to very great advantage from the different sides of Goat Island. Indeed, the great variety of views of the rapids to be obtained from the island, renders it the most eligible place for viewing them. From the southwest corner of this island, just above the Moss islands, you have by far the best view that can be taken from any place. There is too, an amazing rush of water between the Moss islands, the force and sublimity of which may be conceived, but not described; and no tourist or traveller, who desires to behold one of the most wild and fantastic scenes in the vicinity of the great falls, should fail to visit this beautiful and interesting spot.

Goat Island.

GOAT, OR IRIS ISLAND.

Goat Island, is so called, from the circumstance, that about the year 1770, Mr. Steadman, then resident at Schlosser, contrived by some means to put a few goats upon the island ; but its more appropriate and adopted name is Iris Island. It commences near the head of the rapids, almost in the middle of the river, and extends to the precipice, dividing the falls into two sheets. It is half a mile in length, and one fourth of a mile in width, and contains seventy-five acres of rich and heavy timbered land. Situated in the midst of the rapids, and surrounded by them on three sides, this island is one of the most beautiful, fascinating and romantic places in the world; it affords a delightful retreat for "the lunatic, the lover, and the poet," to indulge in their meditations. Fanned by gentle breezes, thickly and delightfully shaded, free from noisome insects, encircled by a neat walk, and presenting to the visiter a great variety of views of the falls and rapids, he feels a reluctance on leaving it, and is wont to exclaim with Montgomery,

"If God hath made this world so fair,
Where sin and death abound ;
How beautiful, beyond compare,
Will Paradise be found !"

Scenery . . . Earliest Dates . . . Indian Remains.

Or with Eve, in the language of Milton, —

"Must I leave thee, Paradise ?
—— These happy walks and shades,
Fit haunt of Gods ?"

About two-thirds of this island are still covered with tall trees, many of which are clothed with a magnificent drapery of ivy and other creeping plants, and many have been killed by reason of the countless names that have been cut into their bark. So strong is the desire of man for immortality, that few can resist the temptation to leave some memorial of their visit to the Falls. The earliest genuine date of any name yet found, is in the year 1769, though names have been cut within a few years, and *dated* back as early as 1745 ; but on the *rocks* near the falls on the American side, there are names chiselled out and dated 1711, 1726, 1745, &c. On Goat Island, a number of human skeletons have, within a few years, been dug up ; supposed to be the remains of Indians buried in a former age, and many more are doubtless now resting there in undisturbed repose. There may they rest, in nature's solitude, till the Great Spirit calls them hence. On this island is found a very great variety of wild plants, shrubs and flowers ; nearly two hundred different species, some of them very rare, have already been discovered. Of the *Tillium Grandiflora*,

Garden.

sixteen varieties are found here. The seeds of plants and flowers, from the shores of all the upper lakes and rivers, have probably been washed upon this island.—Some years since, a number of deer were put upon this island, which soon became quite tame ; but visiters, in order to see them leap, would occasionally frighten them, when they would immediately betake themselves to the rapids, and thus were carried over the falls, until all were finally destroyed.

Judge Porter, the proprietor of the island, has had it in contemplation to lay out upon it a spacious Garden, in which all the plants and fruits adapted to this genial climate, should be cultivated. When this and other projected improvements shall be completed, no other spot on this earth, perhaps, will present attractions equal to this celebrated and beautiful island. The approach to it is from the American side, by means of a bridge of the most difficult and hazardous construction, which extends from the shore, 28 rods, to Bath Island, and thence 16 rods further, to Goat Island.

There are many other beautiful islands situated among the rapids of this river, a number of which, as Bath, Ship, and Luna are, and all the rest might be, connected with Goat Island by bridges, and afford the most charming and impressive views of the surrounding scenery. On Bath Island, which is 24 rods in length, containing

Toll House . . . Centre Fall.

about two acres, is the Toll House, kept by Mr. A. B. Jacobs, who keeps an excellent house of refreshment, and has for sale one of the best collection of Indian curiosities, geological specimens, walking canes, &c. &c. which are to be found at the Falls.

On this island is situated Porter's extensive Paper Mill, three stories high, where is manufactured yearly large quantities of paper. The paper on which this work is printed, was manufactured at this mill.

Luna Island, about 30 yards in width, stands directly on the precipice near Goat Island, and divides the stream, a part of which forms the most splendid cascade, perhaps in the world. This is about twenty-two yards in width, and is sometimes called the "Centre Fall," to distinguish it from the other two main sheets. Approaching this island from the foot of what is called, from the shape of the path, the "Hog's Back," visitors have, from the northwest corner, a much better view of the American fall than can be obtained from any other place. This fall, like the other, has evidently changed its shape within a few years, and has now nearly as much of a resemblance to a horse shoe as the other.

There are ten other islands in the rapids besides those above mentioned, containing perhaps from one-fourth to an acre each, to all of which bridges might, probably, be constructed.



The American Fall, Centre Fall, Island

 Terrapin Bridge and Tower . . . Height of the Falls.

THE FALLS—TERRAPIN BRIDGE AND TOWER.

The broad river, as it comes thundering and foaming down the declivity of the rapids, at length leaps the cataract, three-fourths of a mile in width, and falls, as it were, to the central caves of the earth. The mind, filled with amazement, recoils at the spectacle, and loses for a moment, its equilibrium. The trembling of the earth, the mighty rush and conflict, and deafening roar of the water, the clouds of mist sparkling with rainbows, produce an effect upon the beholder, often quite overpowering; and it is only after the scene has become somewhat familiar to the eye, the ear, and the imagination, that its real grandeur and sublimity is properly realized and felt.

"To sit on rocks, to muse on flood and field,
 To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,
 Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,
 And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been.
 * * * * * *
 Alone o'er steps and foaming falls to lean;
 This is not solitude; 'tis but to hold
 Converse with nature's charms, and see her stores unrolled."

The water on the American side, as ascertained by frequent measurement, falls 164 feet, and on the Canada

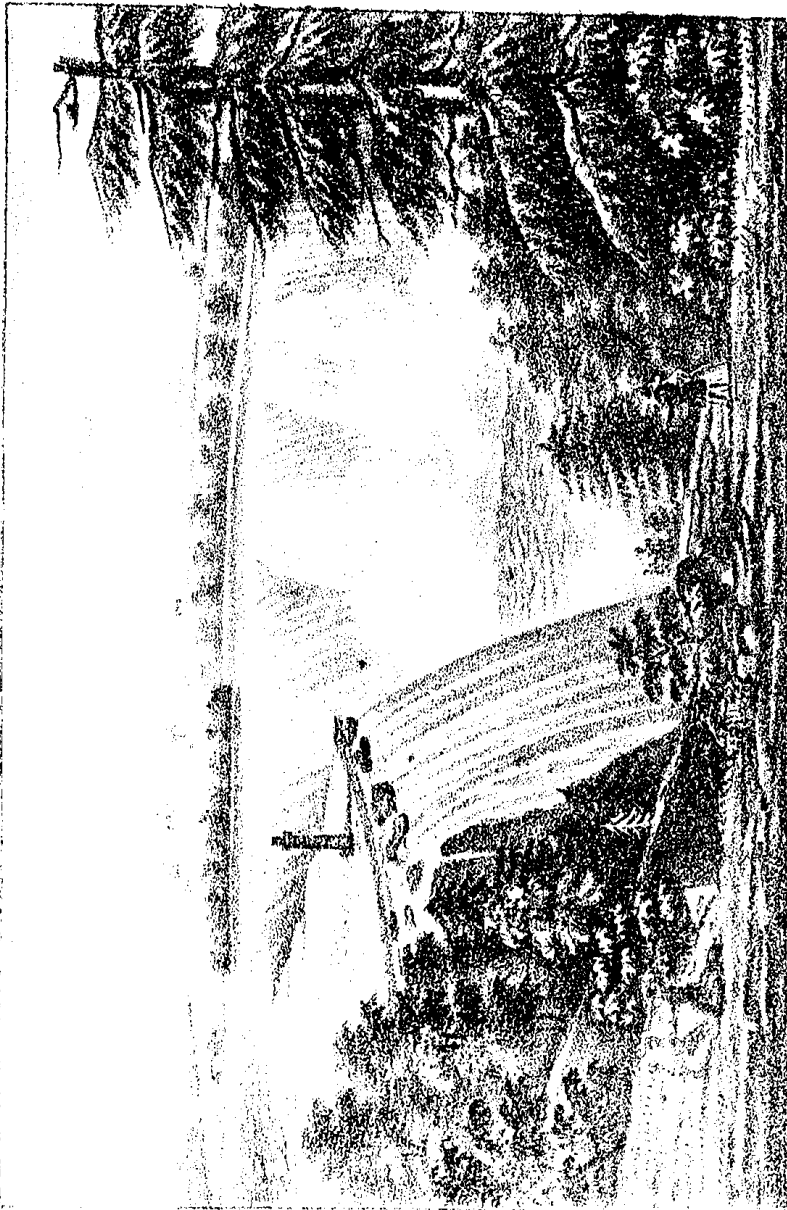
Tower and Bridge . . . Solar Bow.

side, 158 feet. The fall on the Canada side, embracing much the largest channel of the river, is called, from the shape of the precipice, the "Crescent, or Horse Shoe Fall," and near to this a bridge, called the Terrapin Bridge, has been constructed, 300 feet in length, from Goat Island, and projecting ten feet over the falls. Near the termination of this bridge, in the water, and on the very verge of the precipice, a stone tower, forty-five feet high, with winding steps to the top, was erected in the year 1833, from which, or from the end of the bridge, the effect of the falls upon the beholder is most awfully sublime, and utterly indescribable. The sublime, arising from obscurity, is here experienced in its greatest force. The eye, unable to discover the bottom of the falls, or even to penetrate the mist that seems to hang as a veil over the amazing and terrific scene, gives place to the imagination, and the mind is instinctively elevated and filled with majestic dread. Here is

"All that expands, yet appals."

"And such was that rainbow, that beautiful one,
Whose arch was refraction, its key-stone—the sun :
A pavilion it seemed with a Deity graced,
And justice and mercy met there and embraced."

The solar and lunar bows, the river above and below, and indeed the whole scenery of the falls and rapids.



The British Falls from Goat Island.

Tower and Bridge.

appear to better advantage from this point than from any other; and no visiter on either side should presume to leave the Falls without visiting the tower and bridge. From the top of the tower especially, he will realize the force and beauty of the following description, which with the change of a single word, applies admirably to this matchless scene :

“The roar of waters! From the headlong height
Niagara cleaves the wave-worn precipice;
The fall of waters! rapid as the light,
The flashing mass foams shaking the abyss;
The hell of waters! where they howl and hiss,
And boil in endless torture; while the sweat
Of their great agony, wrung out from this
Their Phlegethon, curls round the rocks of jet
That gird the gulf around, in pitiless horror set.

And mounts in spray the skies, and thence again
Returns in an unceasing shower, which round
With its unemptied cloud of gentle rain
Is an eternal April to the ground,
Making it all one emerald; — how profound
The gulf! — and how the giant element
From rock to rock leaps with delirious bound,
Crushing the cliffs, which downward worn and rent,
With his fierce footsteps, yield in chasms a fearful vent.

* * * * *

* * * * * Look back!

Lo! where it comes like an eternity,
As if to sweep down all things in its track,

Lunar Bow . . . Romantic Incident.

Charming the eye with dread, — a matchless cataract,
Horribly beautiful! but on the verge,
From side to side, beneath the glittering morn,
An Iris sits, amid the infernal surge,
Like Hope upon a death-bed, and, unworn
It steady dies, while all around is torn
By the distracted waters, bears serene
Its brilliant hues with all their beams unshorn,
Resembling, 'mid the torture of the scene,
Love watching Madness with unalterable mien.”

The lunar bow, seen at night, in the time of full moon, appears like a brightly illuminated arch, reaching from side to side, and is an object of great attraction, — especially as the world presents but few other places where such a bow is ever seen,

“Hung on the curling mist, the moonlight bow
Arches the perilous river.”

Goat Island, in a moonlight night, is the resort of great multitudes, and is a scene of unrivalled beauty and magnificence. The rapids at such a time sparkle with phosphoric splendor, and nature around wears an irresistible charm of loveliness. There is

“A silver light, which hallowing tree and tower,
Sheds beauty and deep softness o'er the whole.”

The writer once had the pleasure of joining a lovely couple in marriage, about eleven o'clock on one of the