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NIAGARA RIVER AND FALLS.
FROM LAKE ERIE
TO LAKE ONTARIO.

GUARANTEE.
To Whom it may Concern:
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HE beauties and glories of Niagara—its lovely surprises, and its ever renewed, and never exhausted pleasures, are not confined to the great central site of the Cataract, with its wonderful “cadence of waters,” whose majestic waves go on incessantly, moment after moment, roaring and plunging into the seething gulf below. This constitutes, of course, the first, and time-absorbing attraction, and is unquestionably the most impressive and imposing feature of the place; but it does not comprise, by any means, the entire combination of all its unnumbered and exquisite charms. Thousands of hasty visitors who have been content to give all their time to the enthralling contemplation of the mighty Cataract itself, have left the place with much of its more tranquilly captivating, but really unsurpassed loveliness, unenjoyed. The impulse of haste in the midst of the many competitive enticements of Niagara, is quite intrusive and inharmonious. He who would drink in all the sweet influences of the place must leave his hurry behind him, must release himself from all concern about dinner-bells or railroad whistles. The inspiration of lonelines and wonder that pervades this whole glorious region, should be free from all such untimely and trivial invasions.

Chas. J. Latrobe, the enthusiastic young traveller who accompanied Washington Irving, in his adventurous tour to the far west, in 1832, in the account he gives of his frequent rambles along the then wooded banks of the scenic River, records his impression that it was not only the volume and beauty of the waters of the Cataract that gave the place its celebrity, but “every surrounding object,” he writes, “seems to be on a corresponding scale of magnificence,” and of beauty, he might have added: and he points especially—and it is truly one of the grandest and most unexpected revelations of the locality—to the broad expansion of the River above, where sky and water meet on the long horizon line; where the on-rushing stream is fringed with the crests of countless breakers, and flanked by “luxuriant, verdure-clad banks;” and also, to “the extreme beauty of the long forest defiles,” and to the precipices and the sloping hill-sides, and “the floating masses of vapor slowly ascending from the mystery and gloom that conceal the foot of the Fall, and hovering like clouds in the blue sky above; all combining to form a series of views, in which sublimity and picturesque beauty are enchantingly blended.” So also Miss Murray, our English visitor, in 1834; admitting that the Falls, “are quite as magnificent as imagination could desire,” she exclaims, “there is no end to the beauties of Niagara; it should be visited for weeks at a time, instead of days, for the great variety of views which are on all sides;” and as well, she adds, for the ever-changing appearances of the Falls themselves. It was the observation, also, of Miss Martineau, in 1837, that the allurements of Niagara extended far beyond the sound of its deep and sullen mutterings. This lady, gifted with refined perceptions, remarks, speaking of
her first view of the Falls, from the roof of the Clifton House, "I think the emotion of this moment was never after renewed or equalled." She was struck, as many an other discerning observer has been, with the appearance of the seeming hesitation and slowness with which the green, solid looking water of the Horse-shoe rolls over the brink; "a majestic oozing," she says, "which gives a true idea of the flood, but it no longer looks like water." Of her impressions generally, she also affirms, quite in accord with other sympathetic idealists, that "throughout, the beauty was more impressive than the grandeur." It is curious to note the difference of experience that prevails in regard to the occurrence, in the minds of observers, of these two distinct emotional impressions, not always concurrent, of beauty and grandeur. It has been thought, that, of the two so very familiar expressions, spontaneous, in fact, from the lips of all ardent spectators, of "how beautiful" and "how grand," the first will be found to have the most frequent utterance, as a first exclamation. Because, perhaps, there are more minds susceptible to the gentler influences of beauty, than to the severer stress and austerity of grandeur, and because, also, the sentiment of beauty is of itself more restful and agreeable, than the more imperious and oppressive sense of grandeur, of which some indeed soon grow weary. "We sat down," says Miss Martineau, "for the first day or two, before the American Falls, because we found them more level to our comprehension." Says Capt. Basil Hall, "on coming to a scene so stupendous and varied as that of Niagara, the attention becomes embarrassed by the crowd of objects, and it always requires time for the arrangement of the many images suggested, before they can be fully appreciated." This is the general experience. The onward progression and final plunge of the chief Cataracts themselves must be witnessed from several points of view, before they can be said to have been seen, in the sense of being finished or comprehended, as objects of contemplation; and the surrounding and out-lying scenery, must be considered from points of view quite dissociated from the main Falls and their more proximate and naturally allied features. The truth is, the full scope and measure of Niagara is more extensive than is apprehended by many, even, of its most elated and demonstrative admirers. The Rev. Mr. Greenwood of Boston, in 1835, took note, that one must have a knowledge of the place "accumulatively gained," and that would include "its principal accessories," and all "the grand associations with which it is freighted," all of which he says, should be taken into view, if we "would conceive of the Falls as we ought." These are maxims of experience, and are of general application, and they will prove profitable to all who will give heed to the cautions they so forcibly convey. "But the master spell of the majestic torrents will nevertheless be upon us and around us, go where we will; and by whatever especial points or phases of beauty our ever rambling, but always entranced vision may be attracted, the final conviction will be ever the same; that the scenic grandeur, the refined and mysterious beauty, the impetuosity and the serenity, the thousand delights and
surprises that combine to make this place the avowed favorite and unqualified admiration of
the world, cannot be comprehended, or even seen, in a few hurried visits. There is no
possibility of disappointment, of course, upon even the briefest glance. No one could even
glimpse Niagara for an instant, and not be moved with that awful yet joyous sense of sub-
limity and completeness it is always capable of inspiring in the soul of even the most obtuse
and apathetic observer. But merely not to be disappointed, is a very different experience from
that of the full conception of the overwhelming majesty and serene loveliness of the whole
vast spectacle.

The nearest and most popular of all the attractions immediately connected with the
Cataract on the American side, is Goat Island; an elevated pile of gravel and rocks that
divides the main sheet of the waterfall into two unequal portions, the largest and unquestion-
ably the grandest division lying towards the Canada shore; and it is in this portion that the
River has excavated the wonderful angular gap or recess of the Horse-shoe; the crown and
glory of the whole phenomenon. For the beauty and variety of its pleasing scenery this fine
island has no rival. It sustains a luxuriant growth of lofty forest trees, and tangled thickets
and sheltered copses of shrubs and flowering vines, and affords from the foot-paths and
carriage drives that extend along the crest of its precipitous sides, most exquisite and enchant-
ing views of both the American and Canadian Falls. No prospect of the Falls in their
entirety, nor of the amazing emerald floods of the Horse-shoe, can at all equal those obtained
from several points along the Canada shore, and particularly, at and near the site of the now
vanished Table-rock; this must be granted without controversy; but next to these superb
exhibitions, the most effective and ravishing displays are to be witnessed from this island. It
also yields the finest views of the distant and adjacent scenery, including the breakers of the
grand upper Rapids, and the quiet depths and lofty precipices of the lower canyon; across
which swings, in near view, a light and graceful foot and carriage bridge, suspended, nearly
two hundred feet above the surface of the green and quiet water, between the opposite shores,
which are here only twelve hundred feet apart. The magnificent panoramic spectacle of the
entire front of the Falls, and the associated landscape, that bursts upon the eye of the be-
holder from the centre of this bridge, will be a surprising revelation to all who have only
previously observed it from nearer and more readily reached points. Goat Island is the most
inviting, as it is also the most immediately accessible, of the many especially interesting at-
tractions associated directly with the Falls, and is connected with the main shore by a strong
and comely bridge. This island, a remnant of the primeval forest, lies directly south of the
village of Niagara Falls, and forms a very conspicuous feature in the general landscape.
The impetuous rush of the American Rapids along the shallow rock-strewn channel that separates the Island from the main shore, presents a picture so wild and fascinating, that few will be able to turn from it without many an involuntary and reluctant parting glance. The beauty of the boisterous stream is greatly heightened by the exquisite little rocky islets that here and there thrust their green and bosky heads above the hurrying waters. One of these, and the largest, forms part of the Island bridge, and another, the famous and altogether lovely Luna, lies near the northwest corner of Goat Island and stands upon the very verge of the exposed ledge of the American Fall. From this dry and slightly elevated crag, superb views are to be had of the American Sheet, of the green and quiet basin of the River, one hundred and sixty-five feet below, and of the massive cliffs and palisades of the shadowy canyon through which the River, with recovered and rapidly increasing velocity, speeds on towards the Whirlpool. The locality affords no grander or more agreeably diversified view than this. From this point also the American Cascade reveals its graceful and subtle beauty. This lovely sheet of water, eight feet higher than its more gorgeous, and more stupendous rival, is seen to be spread out into quite a thin sheet in comparison with the amazing depth and coherence of the gigantic waves of its majestic neighbor; but it has innumerable ethereal and alluring charms, that are peculiarly its own. It falls like a curtain woven of glittering jewels, descends in delicate and translucent folds, illumined with sparkling showers of light, and gleams and shimmers with illusive, ever changing, and mysterious, color combinations, the prevailing tints of which are green and rose, with brilliant frost-like scintillations. But the radiance is so diffused, and the general view is so absorbing, and the mental impressions are so calm and so vague, that attention to the niceties of definition and detail is positively excluded. It is simply felt to be incomparably, uniquely—beautiful; and it is the conceded testimony to Niagara and its surroundings, that there exists at least one Nature-embellished spot on the earth, where it is uniformly and superlatively so. As Principal Grant well says, the true lovers of Nature are shown here, how infinite in variety she is, where they may see that “every day and every hour, her fairest scenes assume fresh phases of beauty.” On the south margin of this picturesque Island, near its eastern end, and in the troubled waters of the Grand or Canadian Rapids, lie the fair and favorite group of little islands known as The Three Sisters; three irregular piles of boulders and huge fragments of rock, across and around which swift-flying torrents, hurled from the near-lying breakers, leap and scramble with amazing velocity and violence. These islands, covered and shaded by the gnarled and twisted roots and branches of tempest-battered trees, are connected to each other
and to the larger Island by secure and very pretty bridges; upon these the visitor will look with inquisitive surprise, not unlike that of King George, when he confronted the mystery of the dumpling. The water views obtainable in every direction from these islands, far and near—up the broad inclined plane of the turbulent Rapids, the upper boundary of which is the limitless sky, or across the myriad breakers and cascades that leap and clash together in bewildering confusion, between Goat Island and the green shores of Canada,—are exhilarating and joyous in the highest degree. One begins to imagine, here, the magnitude of the stupendous catastrophe towards which, after their long journey, the combined waters of the great central lakes are at last so wildly rushing. Connected with the south-side precipices of Goat Island, and extending across a branch of the principal Rapids to the very verge of the Horse-shoe ledge, and at its northern extremity, lies a shapeless cluster of boulders and fractured rocks, made accessible by the aid of a descending wooden footway. From a narrow, but not permanently secure platform, at the end of this chaotic pile, are to be enjoyed some exceedingly superb views of the central portion of this "prodigious" waterfall. Here, surely will be experienced some new and very thrilling sensations; since one may from these crags, leaning over the brink, and looking down the spray-sprinkled face of the overhanging precipice, a sheer perpendicular depth of a hundred and fifty feet, watch the beaded waters dash over the pile of huge rocks that lie heaped together in confusion below. The great height of these dislocated and unstable cliffs, and the sublimity and magnitude of the vast volumes of water—a

million of tons a minute—seen here to be pouring over them, in one continuous torrent, will now begin to be realized. But not to its full conception; the revelation is not yet complete; for of this amazing mass of water, whose green billows, dashing themselves together, and rolling into and over each other, here, at last, pour down the deep notch and recess of the great excavation of the Horse-shoe, a view still more appalling is to be had from the spray-drenched deck of the little steamer, that glides so pluckily over the snow-like sheet of beaten foam that is spread over the surface of the re-formed, but still agitated water, at the foot of the Cataract. Here surely, as the eye gazes in silent awe upon the slowly descending wreaths of mist and snow-white spray, far beyond the green and jewelled crest of the waterfall, will the unique glory and overwhelming majesty of Niagara be acknowledged.
But notwithstanding the impressive grandeur of the scene here displayed, it will, after all, remain true, that the one supreme, and most complete an unrivalled view of the Niagara Cataracts in their entire scope, and also, and more especially, of the climax of its immense power and peerless beauty as it is exhibited in the tremendous downfall of the accumulated torrents at the Horse-shoe gorge, will be obtained from the over-hanging rocks that still mark, upon the Canadian side of the River, the site of the long famous projecting slab, now vanished, so familiarly known to all visitors as Table Rock. This broad table or platform, extended out from the upper surface of the precipice far beyond its edge, and directly over the howling Cascades of this end of the Horse-shoe Fall. The point has been trodden by thousands of adventurous feet, though few amongst the crowds who in past years have stood there to gaze bewildered over the brink of this natural cantilever, realized the awful peril in which they stood. Enormous and ponderous fragments of this platform have at different periods been shaken loose and hurled into the gulf below,

Where the shattered waters rave,
And the winds their revels keep.

The last of these accidents occurred in the month of June in the year 1850; at the hour of noon and without previous warning, and with a terrific crash and a tremor that alarmed the dwellers in the neighborhood for miles around, a huge mass of the projecting rock, over two hundred feet in length and sixty in overhanging breadth, was torn from the brow of the precipice, and dashed to fragments at its foot; and ere one could spring to see what had happened, Table Rock was gone forever. It sank alone in its glory, its mighty fall unseen, but not unfelt; for at the moment of fracture there was standing upon it one human occupant, the driver of the village omnibus, who at the instant was at work upon his vehicle; startled by the first warning crack, a vigorous leap for life across the visibly opening chasm, brought him safely off, with such of his staggered wits as he was able to gather up upon so brief and urgent a notice. It has been aptly said, that the onward roll, at this point, of the vast cylinder of emerald green water, so grandly swelling over the concealed brink of this roaring chasm, resembles the irresistible advance of an immense tidal wave as it plunges up some rock-paved shore, that is still trembling with the sudden shock of an earthquake. Here, as Charles Dickens exclaimed, when this exquisite vision first burst upon his sight, will at once be stamped upon the heart and memory of every observer, “an image of beauty, to remain there changeless and indestructible forever.” Principal Grant of Queen’s University, Toronto, has pictured the view here unfolded, in words that render superfluous and iterative all further attempts at a mere verbal description of this scene. To stand, he says, on Table Rock, and watch the Rapids madly rushing down—“to see the grand ocean-like wave rising twenty feet in thickness over the Horse-shoe cliffs, so massive that it retains its smoothness unbroken for some distance after its fall, and so close to where you stand that your out-stretched hand may almost touch it—to look down into the Cauldron where the water lies strangled and
smothered by its own weight, only showing the fierce convulsions beneath by the faintest stirrings, its crystalline clearness changed into a seething mass of curdled foam, which wraps it like a winding sheet—to see the vast volumes of vapor, continually rising and falling, now hiding and now revealing the face of the Cataract, while in its deepest centre and curve, volcanic-like jets break into clouds and soar high into the air—to listen to that "vast and prodigious" cadence, and that melody of many waters, that stirred the soul of Father Hennipin to awe and admiration, and that still excites the same emotions in all who are capable of feeling them—all this affords the truest conception, that any one view can give, of the various elements of beauty and grandeur that are combined to form the Niagara Falls; and the oftener one beholds the magnificent sight, the more wonderful and beautiful is it discovered to be." Truly so; and the argument will need no confirmation beyond the evidence of personal experience, to be convincing to any one, that from this elevated belvedere, and indeed, from all along the whole superb promenade that stretches from the terminus of the Horse-shoe abutments to the towers of the suspension bridge, and borders upon the dizzy heights of the Canadian walls of the great canyon, are to be enjoyed more glorious, more perfect, and more far-reaching scenic displays of the Cataract as a whole, and, as well, of many of its more especial and local features, than can be discovered from any of the numerous attractive places of observation, that lie in the path of the loiterer along the American shore, enticing and beautiful, for their many delightful and imposing views, as they all are. So redundant in riches, and so diversified in beauties, is this fair River of Delights, whose attractions are as numberless as it waters are inexhaustible. From the Canadian cliffs, with the Niagara and its deep gorge, and all its numberless attractions, always in sight, one can note the peaceful re-union of the engulfed waters of the chief cascades of the Cataract, as they leisurely rise to their new level, and flow together, once more re-formed, out of the turbulent mass of beaten foam into which they have been lashed and churned in the groaning caverns beneath. Here the River is seen, by a sharp angle, to turn abruptly from its north-west course, and to flow onward, now, in a north-easterly direction. Here, after its few delirious moments of chaos and riot, it comes to almost motionless repose, and re-assumes its appropriate hue of leafy green, its painting and gently undulating surface still disturbed by the writhing and struggling of the conflicting waters two hundred feet below. No more exquisite pictures can be imagined than those that are here brought into view. The broad sweep of the whole imposing panorama—the majestic unrolling of the slowly descending curtain of the Falls—the wild tumult of the rebounding jets and billows at their base—the up-heaving and oscillating of the unstable pillar of cloud and vapor, that rises perpetually "like a ghoul of spray and mist from its unfathomable grave, and that will never be laid"—the ethereal rainbows suspended across its glittering front—the brown and precipitous walls of the deep canyon, and the far receding vista of the on-rushing River—the flocks of snow-winged waterfowl hovering over the raging billows—and high above all the clear cloud-flecked dome of blue that crowns the Cataracts' jewelled brow.