

## CHAPTER V.

MOUNTAIN PLAIN—LEWISTON—QUEENSTON—YOUNGSTOWN  
 NIAGARA VILLAGE—FORT GEORGE—FORT MASSASAUGA—  
 FORT NIAGARA—TRADITIONS—INDIAN INCURSIONS—SUR-  
 PRISAL—ABDUCTION AND MURDER OF MORGAN—REPAIRS—  
 ADDITIONS AND ARMAMENT.

“ Here ends the plain—opposing heights look down  
 On river, valley, forest, lake and town:—  
 Bright river glancing on in silver sheen,  
 Through valley mantled o’er with emerald green;  
 Forest, in whose embowered and sylvan shade,  
 The Indian hunter wooed the dark-haired maid,  
 Near the fair lake on which his light canoe,  
 O’er foam-crowned waves in arrowy swiftmess flew,  
 Ere from afar the invading pale-face came,  
 And hardly left the red-man grave or name.”



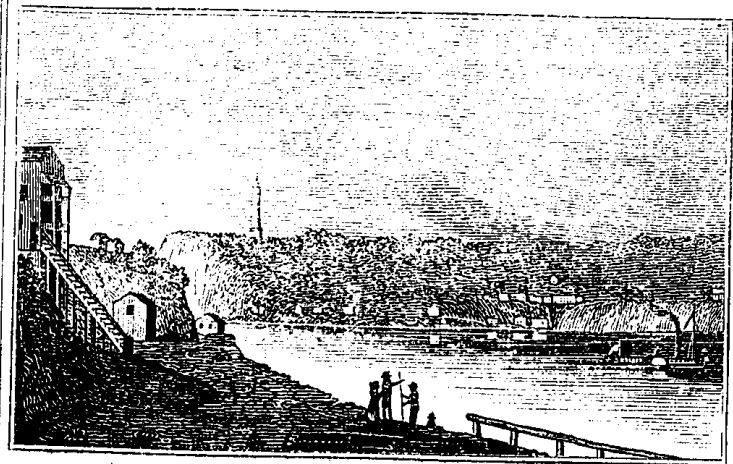
ABOUT seven miles below the falls, the elevated plain, through which the cataract has been for scores of ages cutting and tearing its hard-won way, and having as yet accomplished but one fourth of its appointed task, suddenly terminates, and looks down from a height of nearly four hundred feet upon the villages below, the winding stream, the smiling vale, the rival forts, the dark forests, and the lovely lake. Then, leaving the river, it stretches away to the right to Lockport, where, through a deep artificial chasm,

and a magnificent pile of masonry, forming a double range of locks, the Erie Canal descends the mountain ridge by slow and measured, though Titanic steps; and onward still to the Genesee river, whose shrunken waters, as if afraid to take the fearful leap at which Niagara thrills and maddens, plunge down successive ledges and hide in the lake below; and thence still on and on till the rock-piled plain is lost in the sublime ranges of the Alleghany mountains. The same great plain or ridge passing off to the left, loses itself at last in the distant hills and valleys of the west.

Under the quiet shelter of these great heights — the mountains of Father Hennepin — and on opposite sides of the river, which seems now to smile and gladden at its escape from the dark rock-bound channel, through which it writhed and struggled like a wounded snake, repose the peaceful villages of Lewiston and Queenston, shaking hands across the deep water like twin brothers, by the ferry that connects them. These are the landing places of the Ontario and St. Lawrence steamers; and this the highest point of river navigation below the cataract of Niagara. Both villages are connected with the Falls by rail-road.

LEWISTON presents the pleasing and lovely appearance which characterises so many American

villages, and is the subject of such common remark by native and foreign tourist. An air of subdued softness and religious-like repose seems to hover upon and hallow them all. The village was named in honour of Governor Lewis, in 1805, and was destroyed by the British forces in



LEWISTON LANDING.

1813. At the close of the war it was rebuilt, and has since gradually increased to its present size; but its growth has been extremely languid, and it numbers only about eighty dwellings, and six or seven hundred inhabitants. It is however a pretty and flourishing place, and has a fine academy, one or two churches, and a very excellent hotel, called

the **FRONTIER HOUSE**. The site of **Fort Green**, and the **Five-mile Meadows**, interesting from their connection with reminiscences of border strife, are both near the village, and within the township of **Lewiston**.

**QUEENSTON**, opposite, is a small quaint-looking and irregular village. It contains forty or fifty dwellings, two taverns, and about four hundred inhabitants. The mountain ridge portage commenced here, and terminated at **Chippewa**. The two places are now connected, as before observed, by a rail-road, via the **Falls**.

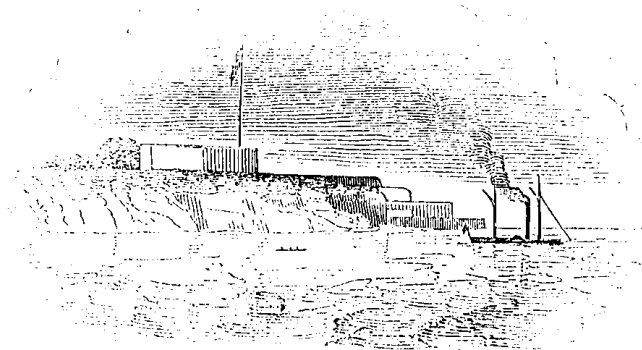
Thirteen miles from the **Falls**, and six from **Lewiston**, on the American shore, stands the village of **Youngstown**, a pleasantly situated, quiet little place, remarkable for nothing but its vicinity to the forts **George** and **Niagara**; and for having been the first village burnt by the enemy, in retaliation for the destruction of **Newark**. It has about forty houses, and perhaps three hundred inhabitants.

On the opposite bank of the stream, the town of **Niagara**, — formerly **Newark**, and erst **Ontario** — and **Fort George** are situate. **Niagara** is the oldest, and, if we except **Buffalo**, the largest place on the river. It contains many fine dwellings, and has a population of about three thousand

persons. Ship building is carried on here to some extent, and there is a chartered **Dry Dock Company**, with banking privileges, whose works are both important and valuable. Formerly, a good deal of the commerce of the interior, centred in this place, but the principal trade has since been diverted to **Hamilton** and other more enterprising, or better situated villages. **Newark**, as it was then called, was burnt by the retreating American forces under **General McClure**, in 1813, and was revenged immediately after, by the destruction of every settlement on the United States' **Niagara** frontier. **FORT GEORGE**, an earth-built fortress, lies just above the village. It was considered of consequence as a military post during the war, and following the fluctuations of the contest, was alternately in the possession of both belligerent armies. It is now deserted and dismantled, and is fast crumbling to ruins.

**FORT MASSASAUGA** stands on the extreme point of the peninsula, at the junction of the river **Niagara** with **Lake Ontario**; and is one and a half miles below **Fort George**, on the same side of the **Strait**. It is constructed of earth, with a large stone block house of a septagonal form, in the centre, which at present mounts a single cannon of twenty-four lbs. calibre. This fort is manned

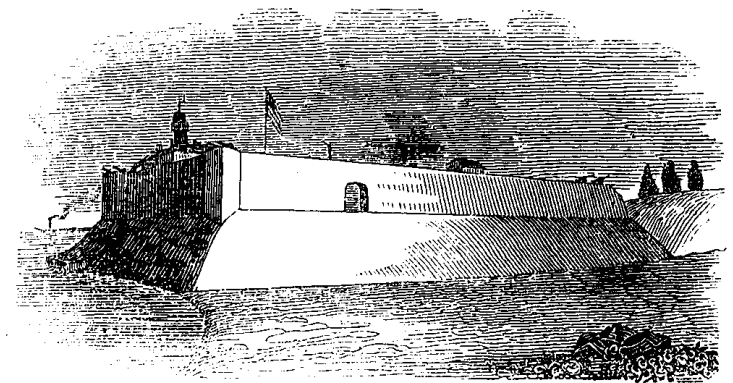
and garrisoned, is kept in good repair, and is said to be a very strong post.



FORT MASSASAUGA.

FORT NIAGARA on the American shore, occupies a similar position, and its defences are washed by the river on one side, and by the lake on the other. The French, English, and American flags have successively floated over its ramparts, and it has probably experienced a greater variety of fortunes, and been a silent witness of more striking and diversified events, than any other place in North America, unless perhaps, Quebec. It was originally settled in 1678 by a French officer, M. de La Salle, who obtained permission of the Indians to build a store-house, seduced them to join in a hunt, and in their absence, erected a fortress. On their return, they were enraged at the

deception, but he found means to soften their anger while he strengthened his position, and ultimately to pacify their resentment. From this point the savages were thence accustomed to sally



FORT NIAGARA.

forth upon the English settlements, and hither they returned after completing the work of slaughter and spoliation, to receive the wages of murder and robbery.

In 1725 the most ancient of the present buildings were erected, and massive piles of masonry attest the importance which the French attached to the place. There are many traditions concerning the early history of the fort, some of which point to crimes of the blackest character, and acts of the most brutal ferocity. If true, they should

be suffered to sleep in oblivion — if false, it were idle to repeat them. At this distance of time, the true could not be distinguished from the false, nor the false be divested of probability. It was an age of excesses and venality, of oppression and endurance. The despotism in which these revolting outrages were born, — if indeed they had being, has passed away ; let the memory of the errors and offences it produced, share its tomb.

Sir William Johnson obtained possession of the fort in 1759, it is said, by fraud ; but the treachery has never been proved. In that year, the magazine was built, and other defences erected. During the revolutionary war, it became again the scene of savage preparation and of savage joy. Here the murdering bands of Brandt, Butler, and Johnson, equipped and painted themselves for the work of butchery and blood, and set out on their inhuman expeditions against the American settlements. The massacres of Cherry-Valley and Wyoming tell the story of their success and barbarity ; the archives of England could perhaps relate their reward. Fort Niagara was the witness of their pow-wows and scalp-dances ; probably of their tortures and sacrifices. Here they were incited to make incursions against the defenceless, to kill, burn, and destroy ; and here they found shelter

and protection from the anger of the indignant, and the vengeance of the injured. When there were none to oppose, they set off to assassinate ; and when they were pressed by the foe, they sneaked back to be defended. Malignant, but not manly — vindictive, but not open — cruel, but not bold, their alliance added nothing to the glory of British arms, while their acknowledged employment fastened an eternal stigma upon the British name. But in spite of all the arts, arms, and alliances of England, America achieved her independence, and in 1796 fort Niagara was given up to the United States, never again to be the scene of such unhallowed festivities, and demoniac triumphs, as disgraced it under the lily and lion banners of its former occupants. During the late war it was surprised by the British, through the treachery, as supposed, of the American commander, Capt. Leonard, and a part of the garrison put to the sword. It remained in their possession until the peace of 1815, when it was again surrendered to the United States.

It has since been the scene of an outrage, as strange as it was base ; and as impolitic as it was atrocious. An American citizen, by the name of William Morgan, for disclosing the secrets of the Society of Free Masons, was seized upon a false

pretext, hurried into a carriage, bound, blindfolded, and gagged, and conveyed post to Fort Niagara, in the magazine of which he was immured for several days, and then murdered! The manner of his death remains a mystery; but the general belief is, that he was taken out in the night, and thrown, loaded with weights, into the river. The perpetrators of this detestable crime were never discovered, though every exertion was made to bring them to justice. The outrage defeated its object, and thus in some measure avenged itself.

Recent events on the frontier, and the critical state of our foreign relations, have called the attention of Government to the importance of Fort Niagara as a military post, and large appropriations have been expended under the direction of able engineers, in strengthening its defences, and adding to their number. These are now nearly completed; its garrison and part of its armament have already arrived, and in the event of another war, it will be found no easy matter to reduce it either by siege or assault. But we trust long years may elapse, before a resort to arms shall again become necessary.

