

Bath Island—The fearful precipice—Hanging Bridge.

VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE AND ISLANDS.



YE will now cross that bridge which leads to Bath Island. Behold how magnificent the wild turmoil of those waters as they roll and foam, and rush on recklessly beneath the bridge on which we stand, to their doomed fall!

It must be a source of surprise to the beholder, that a bridge, such as that on which we are, could be erected amidst this "Hell of waters," at little more than sixty rods from the fearful precipice itself.

The plan adopted was simple, notwithstanding. The first abutment framed of heavy timber, being set up on the bank, pieces were run out, bearing on it, and balanced on the land side by large rocks of several tons weight. These beams were planked over, and thus a hanging bridge was formed on which the workmen ran out stone and dropped them down into the water until the pile showed itself; a

The Bridge.

cradle or strong frame-work was then laid down and filled up with heavy stone-work. This pier was soon connected permanently with the abutment, and the same course of proceeding repeated, until the bridge was finally completed; and by adopting the same plan in making a bridge from Bath Island to Iris, the connection with the main land was made both safe and pleasant. Formerly, the visitor to Iris Island was compelled to land from below in a boat, between the falls at the base of Iris Island.

The first bridge erected here was in 1817, by General PARKHURST WHITNEY, of the Cataract House. It was somewhat higher up the rapids. This structure did not last more than one year, being carried away by the ice. The following summer after its destruction, the present substantial bridge was built by the Messrs. PORTER.

The whole extent of this bridge is forty-four rods, viz: Twenty-eight rods to Bath Island, and thence sixteen rods to Iris Island. It cost about sixteen hundred dollars. This bridge was repaired in 1839, and also in 1849, and is now in a sound and perfect state.

Pause here and scan those overwhelming rapids as they rush down their inclined course, and, rush-

Melancholy occurrence.

ing vainly against the piers of the bridge under us, seem to tussel with each other with ungovernable anger, till, like their countless predecessors, they too go down the horrid leap together!

This bridge has been the silent witness of many a thrilling scene, but of not one which caused more dismay than the following, the detailed account of which we here give from the columns of *The Buffalo Daily Republic* and *Courier* newspapers:—

“MELANCHOLY OCCURRENCE AT NIAGARA FALLS.”

“A most melancholy occurrence took place at Niagara Falls, on Monday night last, about twelve o'clock. A Mrs. MILLER, who represented herself as the daughter of Senator NORVELL, of Michigan, and as the wife of an officer in the army now in Florida, and who, with her children, had been stopping at the Eagle Hotel, jumped from the bridge, leading to Goat Island, into the river, and was carried over the cataract. The particulars of this heart-rending affair are thus given by a correspondent of the *Courier*, writing from the Falls yesterday:

“Our village was this morning thrown into deep gloom by a report that a young lady had probably committed suicide here, during some time last

Newspaper Extract.

night, which is undoubtedly too true. The circumstances are as follows:

“The train of cars yesterday morning brought hither a young woman of fine personal appearance, and about thirty-five years of age, having with her two bright looking boys, four and six years old. After taking rooms at the Eagle Hotel, she called for writing materials, and nothing more was known of her until this morning. Between seven and eight o'clock, the bell of the room she had occupied was rung by the little boys. They were inquiring for their mother.

“Upon the table were found three letters—one directed to Major MILLER, U. S. A., and one to Hon. JOHN NORVELL, Detroit, Mich., and one to the proprietor of the Eagle Hotel, (a copy of which I send you)—also the ringlets of one side of her head, her gold watch, two trunks of clothing, a silk purse containing some gold and silver coins, and her wedding ring.

“The children state that their mother had bid them good-bye and kissed them, after they had gone to bed—that they had last come from Winchester, Virginia, and that their father was in Florida. No cause can be assigned for the act. She appeared perfectly rational throughout yesterday,

Copy of a letter to Mr. White.

and not the least symptom of insanity was noticed. Nothing has yet been found to throw the least light upon the matter.

“P. S.—Enough has been found to warrant the belief that the unfortunate lady leaped from the bridge that leads to Goat Island, and was swept over the Falls. Upon the second pier was found her bonnet, which had been trodden upon. Her black crape shawl was found tied to the railing of the bridge, to let her down upon the pier which is some six feet below the railing. She undoubtedly did this to indicate to those who should look for her, that her mind was made up for the fearful leap into the yawning chasm below.

“Her father has been telegraphed, and the children have been kindly taken charge of, by the Hon. AUGUSTUS S. PORTER.

“The following is a copy of the letter addressed by Mrs. MILLER to Mr. WHITE, of the Eagle Hotel:

“TO THE PROPRIETOR OF THE EAGLE HOTEL—My mind is made up. I have no wish to live any longer. I shall go where my body will never be recovered. No one shall gaze on my mangled remains. Please take care of my two little boys till they can be sent to Detroit, where their grand pa-

Postscript to Letter—Henry Blakemer.

rents reside. They are the sons of Major MILLER, of the Army, now in Florida, and grand-sons of Hon. JOHN NORVELL, Detroit, Michigan. Please forward my letters, and protect my children till some of their relatives can come for them.

‘MRS. J. G. MILLER.’

“POSTSCRIPT.—Since the above was put in type, we have learned that there is every reason to believe that Mrs. MILLER is still alive, having eloped with a friend from Philadelphia, and that she placed the shawl and bonnet on the bridge and wrote the letters, which were found in her room, to convey the impression that she had gone over the Falls. The circumstances leading to this belief are as follows:

“On Thursday last, a man who registered his name ‘Henry Blakemer, Philadelphia,’ stopped at the Exchange Hotel, in this city. He said that he expected some friends in a day or two, and was watching the arrival of every train of cars. On the arrival of the Sunday morning train, he was observed by the porter of the house in conversation, in the sitting room of the depot, with a lady with two children. The lady, who was afterwards ascertained to be Mrs. Miller, took lodgings at the

Mr. Blakemer hires a horse and buggy.

Lovejoy House, but subsequently went to the Exchange, where she remained until Monday morning, when she took the nine o'clock train for the Falls.

"On the afternoon of Monday, Mr. Blakemer went to the livery stable of Mr. Miller on Washington-street, and hired a horse and buggy to go two miles below Tonawanda. He returned about three o'clock on Tuesday morning with a lady, believed to be Mrs. MILLER, leaving her at the railroad depot, when he brought the horse back to the livery stable. He then called at the Exchange for his baggage, and, accompanied by Mrs. Miller, took the fast train which leaves here at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 5, purchasing tickets for Cayuga Bridge."

Twin Islands—Ship and Brig—Lovers' Retreat.

BATH ISLAND.



HERE at this picturesque little Toll House, register your name, and pay twenty-five cents, which sum will give you the freedom of the bridge and islands for the year.

We will now take a look at

SHIP AND BRIG ISLANDS.

Those fantastic twins received their present names from a supposed resemblance to vessels. This little bridge which leads to Ship Island, although slight, may be relied upon as perfectly safe. View the rapids from this point! How wild the world of waters seems. Yet how heavenly peaceful are those islets, embosomed in fair foliage of trees and vines, carpeted with nature's matchless moss, and redolent of flowers that never felt the withering influence of man! Ship Island is also called the "Lovers' Retreat."

A truly tasteful lover of Nature must he be who would here take up his abode away from the

Cupid.

rude realities of a heartless world, which, like the waters that roll around him, is ever progressing regardless of agonies which rise on its course. Aye, this is the spot for the votary of



CUPID!

Goat Island—Iris Island.

IRIS ISLAND.



Is there an isle in this world, which has so great a charm as this little spot of earth, scarcely half a mile long, and but eighty rods wide, containing in all not more than sixty-two acres of arable land. Yet it has been visited by bygone generations from all quarters of the globe, and countless generations yet will tread its walks of wonder.

We before stated that it was also called *Goat Island*. This appellation took its rise from the fact of a Mr. Steadman, then a resident at Schlosser in 1770, placing a variety of animals on it: amongst others a number of goats. Of these, a bearded patriarch was the only one who survived the severity of winter, and he remained in sole possession for a long time.

The beautiful name of *Iris Island*, it derives from the rainbows, which perpetually bend round its shrine at the Falls, which indicate this to be the favorite home of the goddess *Iris*. Here are seats

View from Hog's Back.

where we may sit and rest before proceeding further.

Let us now turn to the right and take a look at the



HOG'S BACK.

This narrow ridge is so called from its peculiar shape. From it you have a magnificent view of the Central Fall, the American Fall, the river below, and the long line of foliaged perpendicular banks which wall the fallen waters as they speed away.

Crescent Fall—Prospect Island.

THE CENTRAL OR CRESCENT FALL

WE will now contemplate the beauties of this Fall; which, though narrow, is, from its amazing depth, alone sufficient to inspire reverence.

It is formed by that portion of the Niagara river cut off by PROSPECT ISLAND from the American volume of water, and is but twenty yards wide. How clear—how sparkling—how fairy-like it looks. No break, no—no difference—all in unity—one beautiful vestal's sheet of stainless hue spread for eternity!

Underneath the rock on which we stand, and behind this cascade, is the CAVE OF THE WINDS, which we will visit presently. But first let us cross this bridge and take a still better view than we have yet had of the American Fall from

PROSPECT ISLAND.

By some this is called LUNA ISLAND. It is in truth a very lovely spot, the view from which is magnificent. Here in this richly embowered Island,

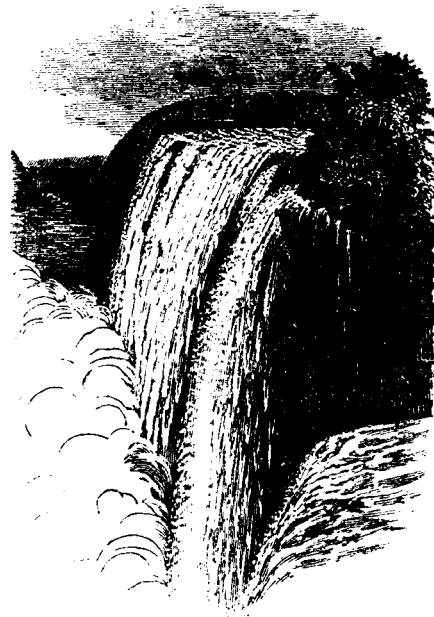
View of the American Fall—The three Profiles.

the bird of liberty, the eagle, used to enjoy his full born freedom in repose, in times when the enslaver, MAN, had not yet profaned its sanctity with his presence. See now—the view is matchless—Here, come the rude rapids, rolling and struggling down, chafing those many little sunny islands as they rush along, as if jealous of their beauty. There, the broad sheet of the AMERICAN FALL tumbles down the dizzy descent in terrible majesty. It is a sight to study—a memory never to be erased. We will now return to Iris Island, and examine the very singular appearance presented from the Hog's Back, being what are called

THE THREE PROFILES.

You must, however, draw powerfully on Imagination, for the action of the waters has nearly effaced them altogether. The first or highest represented the profile of a negro; the second, of a well featured young man; and the third, of an aged man with spectacles.

The three Profiles.



THE THREE PROFILES.

Horse-shoe Fall—Prospect Tower.

VIEW OF THE HORSE-SHOE FALL.

WE now face towards Canada, and by pursuing this walk soon come in sight of the Terrapin Rocks, Bridge, Tower, and the beautiful curve called the HORSESHOE FALL.

How magical is the scene before us! Let us contemplate it.

As you perceive, the name of this Fall is rather inappropriate now, as the constant giving way of parts so changed its form, that it rather resembles the figure 5.

PROSPECT TOWER.

This stone building is forty-five feet high, and was erected in the year 1833, by Judge Porter. There is a flight of winding stairs inside by which you ascend and obtain one of the most unutterably magnificent views that the mind can take in.

You look down into the very caldron itself, and see the peerless green waters how they have been lost in foam and mist. Look up the rapids, and

Remains of a Bridge—Francis Abbott, the Hermit.

see those beautiful billows rushing madly on in their wild career as if desirous of their destined leap. Look at either side and behold the smiling green shores and hear the thoughtless birds how they carrol on, unconscious of the dread abyss and unscared by its endless thunder.

Those timbers which you see scattered about, are the poor remains of a once highly useful bridge which Gen. Whitney built here.

You see that timber which projects over the gulph. On it Francis Abbott, the hermit of the Falls, was in the habit of taking a daily walk, reaching the very end, and turning on his heel to come back. A feat which few would have nerve enough to perform.

The Biddle Stair-case,

THE BIDDLE STAIR-CASE.



OW let us return by the walk we came from Prospect Island, and visit THE BIDDLE STAIRCASE, which we passed in coming here.

This staircase takes its name from NICHOLAS BIDDLE, Esq., at whose expense it was erected in 1829, and to whom the tourist is deeply indebted, as it enabled him to reach this part of the island, to pass over the rocks, and approach the falling sheet of water. Before its construction, the tourist had to come in a boat from the ferry.

A steep of some forty feet, notched into rude steps, leads to the head of the staircase, which is about eighty feet, having ninety steps. From this staircase down to the river is eighty feet more of descent; making the total descent from the top of the bank above, one hundred and eighty-five feet. At this point of the river below, the angler may enjoy his vocation in an unequalled degree. Shortly after this staircase was finished, in the fall

Sam Patch, the jumper—Foot of the Cataract.

of 1829, the eccentric SAM PATCH, the most daring jumper in the world, made two successful leaps here from a platform ninety-seven feet high! Poor Sam, not content with his glory, made another, and a greater leap at the Genesee Falls; but still his ambition was ungratified; he jumped once more from the same place from a height of one hundred and twenty-five feet! This was his last leap: for Sam Patch never rose again, and never since has been heard of.

Having descended the Biddle Stairs, we advance along at the foot of the cliff, with the fearfully impending rocks above us, seeming as if ready just now to fall and crush us. Yet, with all this fear, there is something so imposing in our situation as to render it pleasing, although you see innumerable evidences around you of the constant falling down of fragments from above. But it is a sort of assurance to one that, amongst the countless tourists who have trod this path till now, not a single accident has yet occurred.

Let us now approach the foot of the Cataract, and view the awful splendor of this scene. Look at that hue of green in the horseshoe fall—what can equal that? See the rich silvery waters, how they chase each other down that terrible descent. Here,

The sheet of rolling glass—The Rainbow.

resembling frosted pillars of snow; there, one solid sheet of rolling glass! Behold that lovely rainbow—fit accompaniment of such a picture.

Gaze on. We are in the presence of the enchanter.

The Lower Fishing Rock—View of the great American Fall.

THE CAVE OF THE WINDS.



ON leaving the Biddle Stairs, our best course is to proceed to the Central Fall. Let us descend this sloping bank to that limestone rock at the lowest point of the shore of Iris Island, called the Lower Fishing Rock.

From this point see what a noble view we have of the great American Fall. See the bold cataract, how it falls in brilliant folds down the mighty precipice! What a scene for an atheist to look upon, and then deny the existence of an all powerful Creator! How vast, how grand, how bewildering to the mind! Dwell on it, stranger—try to bring its magnitude within the limits of your comprehension and acknowledge yourself an atom, a mere atom in nature, for that you are, and no more. Then, what is life but a short confused game of mortality!

As we re-ascend the sloping bank to the Central

The Central Fall—The Cave of the Winds.

Fall, we have before us that great curiosity, known

THE CAVE OF THE WINDS.

Come, let us enter. But, first, cast your eyes upwards, and behold the impending cliff which overhangs us like a dark destiny, and see that magnificent sheet of snowy purity, how it leaps exultant from the topmost rock, and flashes down into mid air, and plunges below with the hoarse voice of thunder !

Let us descend these rude steps, and enter the cavern. Listen—here might the ancients have located BOREAS, for, surely, all the chained storms are fretting out their madness here !

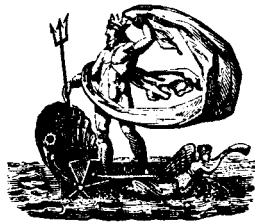
Now we are at the bottom. Let us retire to the back of the cavern, and gaze in silence on the wondrous scene. This awful temple of Nature was first entered in 1834, by Messrs. WHITE and SIMS, residents of the village above us. They came in a boat from the foot of Prospect Island, and entered the Cave with a great deal of difficulty. Some, for the romance of the thing, enter by the same way now, although there is no necessity for so doing.

The dimensions of the Cave are one hundred

Cave of the Winds—A fit Palace for Old Neptune.

feet wide, thirty feet deep, and one hundred and thirty-eight feet high. The bottom is about thirty-five feet from the water's edge, and is composed of those fragments which time and the wearing cataract have broken and let fall upon the spot.

It is curious to observe the spray how it curls along the sloping bottom of the cavern, then rolling up along the rocky back, seeks the shelving ceiling where it breaks into distinct portions, and by its constant action on the air gives those reverberations which have given rise to its title of "the Cave of the Winds." A fit palace for



OLD NEPTUNE HIMSELF.