

A COMPLETE RECORD

OF

NIAGARA FALLS AND VICINAGE

BEING

DESCRIPTIVE, HISTORICAL AND INDUSTRIAL;

CONTAINING

A COMPLETE GUIDE BOOK, LOCAL HISTORY, MANUFACTURING FACILITIES,
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES, BUSINESS FIRMS, ETC.

BY THOS. HOLDER,

NIAGARA FALLS:
PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR.

1882.

PREFATORY.



Thomas Holder

IN preparing previous volumes of the nature of this work for publication on other industrial centers, it has been part of the work of the writer, and a very important part of the same, to review and record statistically and in historical order the rise, progress and standing of the various old established firms as well as the tabulated statements of commerce and manufacture hitherto done at such localities. At Niagara Falls, however, the most interesting businesses are yet in their infancy, however large and well developed they may be, and it is to the future rather than to the past of such concerns that the attention of our readers must therefore be directed. Yet there are many solid mercantile ventures already in operation, of which individual sketches will be found in these pages, showing what has already been accomplished, and to these the editor confidently refers, believing they will afford to all seeking information as to the resources of this village much valuable statistical and descriptive matter. Yet, naturally, the remarkable scenery and the various industrial ventures (established for the purpose of enhancing the comfort and enjoyment of visitors), owing their existence to the scenery, have been allowed to occupy a large portion of this book.

Taking it all in all, as an effort to depict pictorially and literally the natural beauties as well as the growing mercantile *status* of NIAGARA FALLS AND VICINAGE IN 1882, we believe we may safely rely upon the publication which we now place in the hands of our subscribers and readers, to prove itself to be the "Standard Record" we at first stated it would become.

We must admit that the publisher has generously afforded us every assistance which his knowledge of this vicinity could supply, in our task of preparing the work; and, further, that he personally incurred heavy expenses in providing the fine cuts which embellish these pages.

These facts lead us to believe that the volume will be appreciated as a work calculated to increase, by its wide-spread circulation and permanent character, the industrial interests of this locality, and also as a book the appearance of which is equally creditable to its Publisher and to its Author.

THOMAS HOLDER.

NIAGARA FALLS AND VICINAGE.

DESCRIPTIVE.

FOR the reason that the task of describing any scene in nature is difficult or easy in proportion to its rarity, and that we derive our conception of the same from the comparison it will bear with other works of nature, and for the further reason that Niagara Falls is *unique* and totally unlike any other scene on the face of the earth, it is a most onerous task to produce such a pen-picture of the sublimity of the Falls as can convey to the minds of readers who have never beheld it an accurate idea of its grandeur. Such a theme should be handled only by one possessing what Byron has called "a mind to understand the universe," yet the author has decided to portray as best he may the varied scenery of the Great Cataract, in the hope that, if not the *result*, at least the *effort* may be appreciated. Many minds have essayed to reproduce Niagara literally, many pens have recorded the impressions of visitors respecting it, without even faintly describing it. For there is no known rhyme nor rhythm whose cadence will attune itself to the tremendous hymn of this "sound as of many waters," neither will blank verse serve to rehearse its attributes in song. The best specimen of the latter, was written by a gifted poet who visited this locality especially to set forth its beauties in verse, but who recorded only the following words:

"I came to *see!*
I thought to *write!*
I am but *dumb!*"

There is but one way to record poetically the fascinations of Niagara. That is to tell its glories in that plain language, which is the Creator's greatest gift to mankind, and as a part with that stupendous and eternal poem whose strophes and lines are the rivers, mountains, glens, caves and rainbows of the universe of the chiefest of which this locality is a condensation and an exemplification.

Above the Falls, Niagara has, in her rapids, examples of many of the most remarkable combinations of Nature's work; and those who visit here can experience all the pleasure of the mariner in standing on the Goat Island Bridge, knowing that an almost irresistible billowy force is fighting against that structure, situated at the very edge of the gulf into which the river pours, and that they are still as safe as they could be on *terra firma*. It is a feeling that could not be reproduced in any other situation. One seems, when stationed at this point and looking beneath him, to be on the verge of eternity; should the bridge give way, he would, in a few moments, be carried over the cliff and lost! Yet the stability of the bridge removes doubt as to its security, and thus compels confidence even in the presence of the dread power of the current.

If it is possible to imagine that the entire country of England and Scotland could be turned into one grand receptacle for five Inland Seas, such as the lakes which here unite in giving their waters to form the Niagara above the Falls; and if, further, it can be conceived that the peaks of the Alps and the Appenines were located at the Hebrides, so as to contribute their melting snows to this conflux of water, and if it be assumed that the Dover Straits could be made such a river, to traverse the extreme heights above the Downs, and to pour its waters in two grand cascades over the cliffs of Beachy Head, an idea of the Falls proper would be presented to European readers.

Iceland has splendid geysers, sending up heavy clouds of vapors from its boiling springs surrounded by ice. The Matterhorn has its magnificent "*Arc-en-ciel*," which vies with the finest rainbows in splendor; and, from the summits of the Alps, one can look down upon the tops of trees which, from below, are of dizzy altitude. Here all these and other yet more remarkable effects are brought together at one point. England on the south coast and France on her north coast are both proud of their splendid beetling cliffs. The broad English channel rolls between and is a most majestic current.

On the Niagara, similar but more imposing cliffs are brought together in near proximity and form the boundaries of a river which, receiving its waters from the Cataract described, concentrate their mighty force into a turbulent flood upon which one cannot look without allowing the mind to compare it with the Styx of the Ancients, so fierce, dark and turbid, is its flow, and yet this avalanche of power

meets with an effectual stop in its career at the "Devil's Hole," where its course is violently turned aside at an angle of ninety degrees, thus forming a veritable *Whirlpool*, such as cannot be found in any other portion of the globe for strength of current and obstinacy of opposing forces. Thus it would appear that nature has exhausted her resources in placing at this point a dividing line between two countries which deserved to be regarded as impassable. Further, that she reversed the usual order of her works to command the reverence and awe of humanity. Taking her fair coronet of rainbows from the skies, she set it in the midst of a river-fall; planting her high trees at the base of the cliffs, she caused their summits to be viewed from above, providing an almost inconceivable avalanche of waters, she allows them to be observed from below, as if pouring from the clouds; and, in the coldest seasons, without the aid of heat, her mighty cloud of vapor rises, and, condensing in the form of ice on all the surrounding scenery, forms a fairyland of scenic effect which is weird and strange in its conception as the works of enchantment. Yet the mind of man has refused to be subdued by the grandest spectacular effects here displayed, and has calmly proceeded to utilize the very summits of the cliffs for the purpose of suspending bridges to act as connecting links between the two countries which the river seems solely intended to separate, and across them the *iron horse* deliberately conveys the products of human industry to and from each land!

It is safe to assert that there is no point on the earth's surface from which an entire idea of human existence can be more adequately conceived than from the center of one of these bridges, which in the distance, appears as a mere web between the two cliffs, although solid and substantial as the stone foundation which gives their cables a hold. There, suspended in mid-air, between precipices enclosing a terrifying chasm through which rushes the mighty floods described, it is impossible to stand without experiencing that feeling of enthusiasm connected with the assumption that the creation contains no power too great for human control. Yet, when the heavily-laden freight-trains cause the fabric to tremble, the possibility of the breaking of the bridge seems so near and total destruction in that event so certain, that that feeling of exultation is necessarily allied with fearful emotion, recalling the idea of standing face to face with eternity. Thus briefly and tersely as we may, we have recorded the *locale* of a town which is

at once a village and a city, for the reason that it contains the grand and interesting scenery as well as splendid manufacturing establishments and great triumphs of human skill, although it has not more than 4,000 inhabitants!

A proposition has sometimes been made to convert this place into a park to the exclusion of manufactures. It is probable, however, that the various industries will be able to draw all the power required from the Falls without making any perceptible difference in their appearance, and that, while their utility will be greatly augmented in the coming years, their value as a pleasant health-resort will be in no whit abated. Yet, in that portion of this book devoted to the scenery of the Falls and the industries depending upon them, it will be found that we have endeavored to do full justice to such matters as seem worthy of extended mention in relation thereto. It must, however, be remembered that we are presenting Niagara Falls in a manner in which it has never before been published, viz., from an industrial stand-point, and if we seem to give greater prominence to the triumphs of engineering and mechanical skill which, as if in rivalry of the masterpiece of Nature's work, have located some of the largest and most important industries and grandest feats of inventive art at Niagara Falls, we must refer to our ultimate object (that of setting forth their natural business resources) as our reason for that.

THE FALLS OF NIAGARA.

A GUIDE BOOK WHICH HE WHO RUNS MAY READ.



TERRAPIN TOWER.

THE majority of the Guide Books heretofore prepared, or now extant, relating to this locality, possess one or other of the following objectionable features: Either they have been written in the interest of some particular class of advertisers, who are lauded, while it is sought to be made apparent that all other local tradesmen are unworthy of notice, to the detriment of the real object and purpose of the book; or they have appeared, professedly, solely in the interest of visitors, and, for that reason, abuse in round terms every business connected with the exhibition of the grand scenic effects hereabouts, making it appear that all money charged for value received in sight-seeing is a swindle. A Guide equally free from these means *ad captandum vulgus* has long been a *desideratum* and is here presented.

In the preparation of this work we have endeavored to tell simply and plainly what there is to see at Niagara Falls, so that our *Guide* may be used by all coming here as a means of selecting points of interest to visit, and afterwards taken abroad to show to absent friends what has been seen. Keeping that object in view we have inserted many fine cuts illustrative of the Falls and vicinage, and trust and believe that our efforts to serve the public in this particular will be widely appreciated.