
 Earliest Discoveries.

east side of the river, and the great rock which is on the west, and lifts itself three fathoms above the water, or thereabouts. The gulf into which these waters are discharged, continues itself thus two leagues together, between a chain of rocks, flowing with a prodigious torrent, which is bridled and kept in by the rocks that lie on each side of the river.

“Into this gulf it is that these several cascades empty themselves, with a violence equal to the height from whence they fall, and the quantity of water which they discharge; and hence arise those deafening sounds, that dreadful roaring and bellowing of the waters, which drown the loudest thunder, as also the perpetual mists that hang over the gulf, and rise above the tallest pines that are in the little isle so often mentioned. After a channel is again made at the bottom of this dreadful fall, by the chain of rocks, and filled by that prodigious quantity of waters which are continually falling, the river of St. Lawrence resumes its course. But with that violence, and its waters beat against the rocks with so prodigious a force, that it is impossible to pass even in a canoe of bark, though in one of them, a man may venture safe enough upon the most rapid streams, by keeping close to the shore.

“These rocks, as also the prodigious torrent, last for two leagues; that is from the great falls, to the three

 Earliest Discoveries.

mountains and great rock; but then it begins insensibly to abate, and the land to be again almost on a level with the water, and so it continues as far as the Lake Ontario or Frontenac.

“When one stands near the fall, and looks down into the dreadful gulf, one is seized with horror, and the head turns round, so that one cannot look long or steadfastly upon it. But this vast deluge beginning insensibly to abate, and even to fall to nothing about the three mountains, the waters of the river St. Lawrence begin to glide more gently along, and to be almost upon a level with the lands; so that it becomes navigable again as far as the Lake Frontenac, over which we pass to come to the new canal, which is made by the discharge of its waters. Then we enter again upon the river St. Lawrence, which not long after makes that which they call the Long Fall, an hundred leagues from Niagara.

“I have often heard talk of the cataracts of the Nile, which make the people deaf that live near them. I know not if the Iroquois, who formerly inhabited near this fall, and lived upon beasts which from time to time are borne down by the violence of its torrent, withdrew themselves from its neighborhood, lest they should likewise become deaf, or out of the continual fear they were in of rattle-snakes, which are very common in this place

 Earliest Discoveries.

during the great heats, and lodge in the holes along the rocks as far as the mountains, which lie two leagues lower."

The writer, after considerable inquiry and personal examination, is unable to determine what Father Hennepin means by the Three Mountains, and the Great Rock; and he cannot believe that the falls were ever six hundred feet high, as is repeatedly stated in the book. But Father Hennepin's description is, in the main, remarkably correct; and establishes the fact, that in 1678, there were three distinct falls as they are now, and that the fall on the Canada side exhibited then somewhat of the appearance of a horse shoe. His description too, of the islands, shores, &c., corresponds with their present appearance.

In a work written by the Chevalier de Tonti,* who was of the party with Father Hennepin, there is a description of the falls, and of Niagara river, corresponding with, and corroborating Hennepin's, but with the addition of no important facts.

Baron La Hontan,† who visited this cataract in May,

* Entitled, "Relations de la Louisiane et du Fleuve Mississippi, etc. 1720, Amsterdam, par le Gouverneur de Tonti, Gouverneur du Fort Saint Louis, aux Illinois."

† His book is entitled, "New Voyages to North America, etc. Written in French, by the Baron La Hontan, Lord Lieutenant of the French Colony at Placentia, in New-Foundland, at that time in England. Done into English, the second edition. London, 1735."

 Earliest Discoveries.

1688, thus describes it: "As for the waterfall of Niagara, it is seven or eight hundred feet high, and half a league broad. Towards the middle of it we descry an island that leans towards the precipice, as if it were ready to fall. All the beasts that cross the water within half a quarter of a league above the unfortunate island, are sucked in by the force of the stream. And the beasts and fish that are thus killed by the prodigious fall, serve for food to fifty Iroquese, who are settled above two leagues off, and take 'em out of the water with their canows. Between the surface of the water that shelves off prodigiously, and the foot of the precipice, three men may cross in abreast, without any other damage than a sprinkling of some few drops of water."

In the Philosophical Transactions, for 1722, there is a description of the falls, given by Monsieur Borasseau, who had visited them at seven different times. He says that the Governor of Canada had, on the previous year, "ordered his own son, with three other officers, to survey Niagara, and take the exact height of the cataract, which they accordingly did, with a stone of half a hundred weight, and a large cod line, and found it, upon a perpendicular, twenty-six fathoms," or one hundred and twenty-six feet.

These extracts may not be considered of much value, except by those persons who have a curiosity to learn

 Places of Descent . . . View from Brock's Monument.

something about the falls, as they appeared in a former age.

There are five places between the Falls and Lewiston, where persons can descend from the top of the bank to the water, viz: from the end of Mr. Childs' and also Mr. Graves's farm, at the Whirlpool, at the Devil's Hole, and from the end of Mr. Colt's farm. There are also, on the Canada side, a number of places where visitors can descend safely to the water's edge. From these places under the bank, the river scenery appears transcendantly beautiful and sublime, and the rapids strike the beholder with more amazement, if possible, than the falls themselves. Here may be found in reality,

"A happy rural seat of various view ;

Flowers of all hue, —————

Umbrageous grotts and caves

Of cool recess, o'er which the mantling vine

Lays forth her purple grape, and gently creeps

Luxuriant."

The top of the bank on either side, near Brock's Monument, affords a delightful and almost boundless prospect of the country and lake below. The unrivalled Niagara is traced to its outlet, guarded by two opposite Forts, and bearing sloops and steamboats into the glassy lake; while the mighty expanse of plains and waters presents

 Quantity of Water passing over the Falls.

a scene so picturesque and enchanting, that the traveller leaves his position with reluctance. From Lewiston to Lake Ontario, seven miles, the river is deep, smooth and navigable for boats and vessels of every description; and Lewiston, being the head of navigation, is the principal landing place for the steamboats that run on Lake Ontario.

At the mouth of the Niagara river, on the American side, stand the villages of Youngstown and Fort Niagara; and on the Canada side, the villages of Niagara and Fort George.

The quantity of water constantly pouring over the falls, and passing into the lake, is computed, from probable data, at 670,250 tons per minute: but Dr. Dwight computes it, from the depth, width, and velocity of the current, at more than eighty-five millions of tons per hour; and by another calculation, supposing a swifter current, at 102,093,750 tons per hour. Darby computes it at 1,672,704,000 cubic feet per hour. These results are somewhat different, but the first is probably nearest the truth. Dr. Dwight supposes, in one calculation, a current of five, and in the other, of six miles per hour, the least of which is undoubtedly too much. The prodigious torrent of waters, and the tremendous rush and noise of the falling cataract, seems to put at defiance all attempts at calculation.

OBJECTS OF SPECIAL INTEREST — CURIOSITIES.

A number of these, as the islands, the bridges, the stair-cases, the burning springs, Brock's Monument, the Welland Canal, &c., have already been described. One mile above the falls; on the American side, is the site of old Fort Schlosser; a place somewhat distinguished in the early history of this region, and commanding a most beautiful prospect of the river and rapids, of Grand and Navy Islands, and of the village of Chippewa, on the opposite shore. Nothing remains of the fort, except the entrenchments, and a few rods of pavement within.

A stockade was built here in the year 1672. Before the construction of the Erie Canal, all the business between the lakes were interchanged by means of a land carriage from this place to Lewiston. Half a mile below the falls, under the bank, are Catlin's Caves, a visit to which no traveller will be likely to regret. Vast quantities of calcareous or petrified moss are found here in all stages of its petrifying process. On the other side, nearly opposite, is Bender's Cave, a place which is thought to be worthy a special visit.

MINERAL SPRING.

Two miles below the falls, on the American side, is a Mineral Spring, containing sulphuric and muriatic acids, lime and magnesia; and by the use of its waters many important cures have been effected. For scrofulous, rheumatic and cutaneous complaints, this spring supplies an almost sovereign remedy. From the stage road near the spring, travellers have a most delightful view of the whole falls, two miles distant; and if they see the falls from this place first, as they generally do in coming up from Lewiston, the impression here made will probably never be effaced. Capt. Hall remarks respecting this place, "I felt at the moment quite sure that no subsequent examination, whether near or remote, could ever remove, or even materially weaken the impression left by this first view."

 WHIRLPOOL.

One mile further down leads to a tremendous whirlpool, resembling very much, in its appearance and gyrations, the celebrated Maelstrom on the coast of

 The Whirlpool.

Norway. Logs and trees are sometimes whirled around for days together in its outer circles, while in the centre they are drawn down perpendicularly with great force, are soon shot out again at the distance of many rods, and occasionally thrust into the channel to pass down the river. The river here makes nearly a right angle, which occasions the whirlpool, — is narrower than at any other place, — not more than thirty rods in width, — and the current runs with such amazing velocity as to rise up in the middle ten feet above the sides. This has been ascertained by actual measurement.

“Resistless, roaring, dreadful down it comes, —
 There, gathering triple force, rapid and deep, —
 It boils, and wheels, and foams, and thunders through.”

There is a path leading down the bank to the whirlpool on both sides, and, though somewhat difficult to descend and ascend, it is accomplished almost every day on the American side, by gentlemen, and often by ladies.

A brisk and very refreshing breeze is felt there during the hottest and stillest days of summer; and no place is better fitted to elevate and expand the mind. The whirlpool is a phenomenon of great interest as seen even from the top of the bank, especially if a small telescope be used; but to have any adequate idea of its power

 Whirlpool . . . Perilous Incident.

and motion, visitors ought to descend to the water's edge, and walk some distance up the river. The rapids here are much more powerful and terrific than they are above the falls, and appear like a flood of watery brilliants rushing along.

Having written thus far, the writer laid down his pen and started off on a fresh visit to the whirlpool; and now, having spent half a day there in mute astonishment and admiration, and walked more than a mile by the river's edge, he is utterly at a loss what language to use in describing it. He is aware that the above description is tame and meagre; and yet he can think of no language, no imagery, no comparison, that will not fall immeasurably short of conveying a just idea of the scene. He can only say, soberly and earnestly, that no gentleman ought hereafter to acknowledge that he has seen the Falls of Niagara, unless he could also say he had seen the Whirlpool, from the water's edge. A staircase down the bank, would be a great accommodation to visitors, and it is to be hoped that one ere long will be constructed. Water for hydraulic purposes, may easily be brought into use here to an almost unlimited extent.

About the year 1812, an accident occurred here, perhaps worth recording. A party of men were employed in cutting cedar logs near the river about the whirlpool, with a view to get them floated to Lewiston. One man

Devil's Hole.

stepping upon some of them that were rafted, was imperceptibly, or perhaps through carelessness, drawn out into the current, and swiftly carried into the whirlpool. He clung to a log and was carried round and round in the capacious basin for hours, expecting every moment to be crushed among the logs or thrust into the vortex, while his companions on shore could afford him no relief. At length some of them ascended the bank, went to Queenston, four miles, and procured a boat to be drawn up by a team. This was let down the bank, and many people assembled with ropes, poles, &c. to render assistance. After the boat had been well secured, and some men had stepped in intending to push out into the whirlpool, the man upon the log, still whirling in imminent peril of his life, was, by some action of the water, sent out directly to the shore, and finally saved, without receiving any aid from others.

DEVIL'S HOLE.

A mile below the Whirlpool is a place on the American side, called the "Devil's Hole," embracing about two acres, cut out laterally and perpendicularly in the rock by the side of the river, and about one hundred and fifty feet deep. This name was probably given from that of

Devil's Hole.

the personage more frequently invoked in this region, formerly, than any other. How this hole was thus made it is difficult to conjecture. Visitors look into it with silent, inexpressible amazement. An angle of this hole or gulf comes within a few feet of the stage road, affording travellers an opportunity, without alighting, of looking into the yawning abyss. But they ought to alight and pass to the farther side of the flat projecting rock, where they will feel themselves richly repaid for their trouble. The scenery there presented is singularly captivating and sublime.

This place is distinguished by an incident that occurred about the year 1759. A company of British soldiers, pursued by the French and Indians, were driven off this rock at the point of the bayonet. All, save one, instantly perished upon the rocks two hundred feet beneath them. This one fell into the crotch of a tree, and succeeded afterwards in ascending the bank and making his escape.

A man by the name of Steadman, who lived at Fort Schlosser, was among this company of British, but made his escape on horseback, just before coming to the bank, though many balls whizzed about him in his flight. The Indians afterwards imagined him to be impenetrable, and invincible, became very friendly, and ultimately, in consideration of some services he rendered them, gave him all the land included between Niagara river and a

 Tuscarora Indians.

straight line drawn from Gill Creek above Fort Schlosser to the Devil's Hole, embracing about 5000 acres. The heirs of Steadman, so late as the year 1823, instituted and carried on a long and expensive law-suit against the State of New-York, to recover this land. But they could show no title, and the suit resulted in favor of the State and the present occupants.

 TUSCARORA INDIANS.

Eight miles below the Falls, and three miles back from the river, is the Reservation of the Tuscarora Indians, containing two miles in width by four in length, (about 5000 acres,) of very excellent land. They consist of about three hundred souls, have a Presbyterian Church of fifty members, a resident clergyman, and a school teacher, and a Temperance Society of more than one hundred members. They are under the care of the American Board of Foreign Missions. Their village is delightfully situated on a high bank commanding an extensive prospect of the surrounding country, and of Lake Ontario. But the greater part of the Indians live in a settlement a mile and a half from the village, and are not generally seen by visitors.

 Battles.

These Indians came from North Carolina, about the year 1712, and joined the confederacy of the Five Nations, themselves making the Sixth. They formerly held a very valuable interest in land, in North Carolina, but have recently sold it and divided the proceeds equally among themselves. Many of them are in very prosperous circumstances; in the year 1834, one man raised and gathered fifty acres of wheat.

Visitors at the Falls have been in the habit of going, sometimes in crowds, to this village on the Sabbath; but the Indians, with their Missionary, have often expressed their desire that visitors would not interrupt them at that time.

 BATTLES.

In the immediate vicinity of the Falls, many incidents have occurred to impart an additional interest. This was the scene of a number of battles fought during the last war with Great Britain; those at Fort Erie, Chippewa, and Lundy's Lane, were among the most bloody and hard fought, that are recorded in history. In the battle near Fort Erie, there was what has generally been considered, a Military Chief d'œuvre; the Americans, to the

Bridges.

number of 1000 regulars and 1000 of the militia, made a sortie and took the British works about 500 yards from their line, and returned in triumph. The battles in this region occurred in the following order, viz : at Queens-
ton, October 13, 1812; at York, April 27, 1813; at Fort
George, May 27, do.; at Stoney Creek, June 5, do.; at
Beaver Dam, June 24, do.; Naval Battle on Lake Erie,
September 10, do.; the village of Niagara Falls, Lewis-
ton, and Youngstown burnt, December 19, do.; Buffalo
and Black Rock burnt, December 31, do.; Fort Erie taken
July 3, 1814; battle of Chippewa, July 6, do.; at Bridge-
water or Lundy's Lane, July 25, do.; at Fort Erie,
August 15, and September 17, 1814. The burning of
villages and plunder of property on the frontier, are
still remembered, and the circumstances detailed with
thrilling interest, by many of the inhabitants.

BRIDGES.

In the year 1817, a bridge was constructed from the
shore across the rapids to the head of Goat Island, but
was swept away by the ice the ensuing spring. The
present bridge was constructed in 1818, and is forty-four
rods in length, exclusive of Bath Island. This bridge,
though crossing the foaming rapids only sixty-four rods

Bridges.

above the falls, over which visiters are at first disposed
to walk lightly and with quickened pace, is perfectly
safe for all kinds of teams and carriages, and seems
destined to stand a great length of time. Multitudes
inquire, with wonder and eager curiosity, how it could
have been constructed in this imminently dangerous
place.

They shall be informed; and they will see that, like a
thousand other difficult things, it was easily accomplish-
ed, when the *mode* was ascertained. Two very long
timbers were thrust out from the shore on an abutment,
having the forward ends elevated a little above the rapids
and the others firmly secured upon the bank: these were
then covered with plank for a temporary bridge. At the
extremity of this bridge, very large stones were let down
into the river, around which timbers were sunk, locked
together so as to form a frame, which was afterwards
filled with stone. To this, constituting the first pier, a
firm bridge was then constructed, and the temporary
bridge shoved forward so as to build a second pier like
the first, and so on till the whole was completed. The
honor of projecting and constructing this bridge belongs
jointly and equally to the proprietors, the Hon. Augustus
and General Peter B. Porter.

Till the year 1817, there was no way of descending or
ascending the bank below the falls, except by a ladder

 Places of Resort . . . Minerals.

about one hundred feet in length; since then a safe and convenient flight of stairs has been built, by which visitors can have an easy descent to the ferry, and an opportunity to pass a considerable distance behind the magnificent sheet of water. Perhaps there is no place where the height of the fall is so impressively realized as here.

 PLACES OF RESORT — MINERALS.

There are a number of pretty establishments at the Falls, where are kept on hand rich specimens of the mineral, fossil, vegetable and animal productions of the vicinity. Among these establishments, as a place of resort, Mr. W. E. HULETT's, deserves a conspicuous notice. His place is directly opposite the Cataract Hotel, and visitors will there find a library, reading-room, billiard-room, &c. &c., and a most splendid collection of minerals, both from the vicinity of the Falls, and from other parts of the United States.

Mr. A. B. Jacobs, on Bath Island, Mr. S. Hooker, and some others, on the American side; and Mr. Barnett, at his Museum, Mr. Starkey and Mr. Shultersburgh, on

 Incidents.

the Canada side, keep on hand an assortment of mineralogical specimens, a variety of elegant articles of Indian manufacture, canes, &c. Among the minerals kept for sale, are, transparent selenites; snow-white gypsum; calcareous, bitter, dog-tooth, and fluor spar: crystalized quartz; petrifications; favasites and other fossils; shells, &c. There are also some noble specimens of bald and gray eagles, with which this region abounds.

 INCIDENTS.

Men have occasionally been drawn into the rapids with their boats, and carried over the falls; but not a vestige of them or their boats has scarcely ever been found. The great depth of the water below, and the tumultuous agitation occasioned by the eddies, whirlpools, and counter currents, make it next to impossible for any thing once sunk to rise again, until carried so far down the stream as to make fruitless any research.

In the year 1820, two men, in a state of intoxication, fell asleep in their scow which was fastened at the mouth of Chippewa Creek; while there it broke away, and they awoke finding themselves beyond the reach of hope, dashing over the rapids.

 Vessels driven over the Falls.

In the year 1822, two others, engaged in removing some furniture from Grand Island, were by some carelessness drawn into the rapids, and hurried over the cataract.

In 1825, two more, in attempting to smuggle some whiskey across to Chippewa, were hurried into the rapids and shared a similar fate. A story has frequently been told of an Indian, who fell asleep in his canoe some miles above, and awoke in the midst of the rapids; perceiving that all efforts to escape would be vain, he turned his bottle of whiskey down his throat, and composedly awaited the awful plunge. This story the writer believes to be fabulous, as he has never been able to find any foundation for it, except that it is a stereotype Indian story, told as having happened at all the different falls in the country.

In September 1827, notice having been given in the newspapers that the Michigan, a large vessel that had run on Lake Erie, would be sent over the falls, thirty thousand people, it was supposed, assembled to witness the novel spectacle. On board of this vessel were put two bears, a buffalo, two rackoons, a dog, and a goose; the bears leaped off in the midst of the rapids, and, miraculously almost, finally reached the shore in safety. The others went over and perished. The Michigan before she reached the falls, having been considerably

 Vessels driven over the Falls.

broken in the rapids, sunk to a level with the surface, and went over near the centre of the horse-shoe fall. The distance from deck to keel was sixteen feet; and as she did not appear to touch the bottom for eighty rods before she went over, the conclusion is, that the water as it passes over the precipice there must be at least twenty feet deep.

In October 1829, another vessel, the Superior, was advertised to be sent over, which drew together about fifteen thousand people. This vessel lodged in the rapids and remained a number of weeks, and finally passed over the falls in the night.

In August 1828, a small sloop, abandoned by the men through fright, near the mouth of Chippewa Creek, was blown with all her sails up, so far across the river as to come down on the American side of Goat Island; but was broken to a perfect wreck in the rapids, so as to pass under the bridge and over the falls.

In July 1832, a canal boat was blown over from Chippewa, and lodged in the rapids a short distance above the bridge. Some men and one woman were on board, and were saved at most imminent peril, and the boat was finally secured and drawn ashore.

The rock at the falls is hard limestone to the depth of about seventy feet, below which it is loose, crumbling shale, which is constantly wearing away and leaving a projection of the limestone.

 Fall of Table Rock . . . Sam Patch.

A mass of Table Rock, 160 feet in length and from 30 to 40 feet in width, fell off in July 1818, with a tremendous crash. On the 9th of December 1828, three immense portions broke from the horse-shoe fall, causing a shock like an earthquake. Another large portion fell in the summer of 1829, and the noise it occasioned was heard several miles. And yet, judging from the published accounts of the falls which reach back nearly two hundred years, there has been but very little recession of the falls within that period.

In October 1829, Sam Patch jumped twice, in the presence of thousands of spectators, from the top of a ladder ninety seven feet high into the eddy below the falls. This ladder was erected directly below the Bid-
dle Stair-case. Poor Sam afterwards lost his life by jumping from the falls of Genesee River, at Rochester.

May 19, 1835, two men in attempting to pass down the river from Tonawanda to Chippewa in a scow, were driven by the wind into the rapids, and one of them went over the falls; the other, after leaping from the scow, reached a shoal where he could stand in the water with his head out. In this situation he was seen from the American shore; and two men, at the imminent hazard of their lives, went out in a boat, and succeeded in saving him, and returning safely to shore.

Again, June 10, 1835, two men in passing from Schlos-

 Burning of the Caroline.

ser to Chippewa, in a skiff, were drawn into the rapids and hurried to destruction. While in the rapids, they were seen for a short time by persons on the Pavilion. Some days afterwards, their bodies were found in an eddy a mile below the falls, one of which was deprived of a leg and an arm.

Another melancholy incident happened on the night of December 29, 1837, while the Patriots were in possession of Navy Island. The steamboat Caroline, while lying at Schlosser, was at midnight attacked by a party of Canadian soldiers and one person killed. She was then towed out into the stream, set on fire, and was carried over the falls by the current. Nothing was to be found of her the next morning except a small quantity of the wreck which was thrown upon the shore below the falls. The history of this boat was somewhat singular; she was originally built at Charleston, South Carolina, was from thence brought to New York, from thence to Albany, and from Albany she was brought through the Erie and Oswego Canals to Lake Ontario, and from Lake Ontario through the Welland Canal to Chippewa, U. C., between which place and Buffalo she plied for some time as a passage boat; until she was seized by the Collector of Buffalo, condemned, and sold for a violation of the revenue laws, and at length, during the Canadian disturbances, finished her career, by a leap down the awful abyss of Niagara.

Perilous Situation and Daring Rescue.

An occurrence of the most thrilling interest took place July 25, 1839, while the workmen were employed in repairing the bridge to Iris Island.

A man by the name of Chapin, while at work upon a staging, about 100 feet from the Island, accidentally lost his footing and was precipitated into the rapids, and in an instant swept away towards the great cataract. Speedy destruction seemed to await him; but fortunately he was uninjured by the fall, and in this condition retained his self-possession. He succeeded, by great dexterity in swimming, in effecting a landing upon a little island, the outermost of a group of little cedar Islands, situated some 30 or 40 yards above the falls, between Goat Island and the American shore.

There he remained for an hour, looking beseechingly back upon the spectators who lined the shore, among whom were his wife and children, and with whom he could hold no communication on account of the distance and the roar of the falls. In this emergency, Mr. J. R. Robinson, a man of extraordinary strength and intrepidity, and an excellent boatman, generously volunteered his services to attempt his rescue. A light boat of two oars, similar to the Whitehall race boats, was soon procured and he embarked.

He proceeded with great deliberation and skill, darting his little boat across the rapid channels, and at the

Perilous Situation and Daring Rescue.

intervening eddies, holding up, to survey his situation and recover strength. As he neared the island, a rapid channel still intervened, rendering the attempt to land very hazardous. He paused for a moment, and then with all his strength, darted across and sprang from his boat—his foot slipped, and he fell backward into the rapid current. With the most consummate coolness and skill, he retained his grasp on the boat, sprang in, and seizing his oars, brought up under the lee of the little Island. Still the great labor and hazard of the undertaking remained to be overcome. Robinson proved equal to the task. Taking his companion on board in the same careful and deliberate manner, though at infinitely greater hazard and labor, they effected a safe landing upon Goat Island. There the spectators assembled to give them a cordial greeting. A scene of great excitement ensued. The boat was drawn upon the bank and by acclamation a collection was taken up on the spot for Chapin and his noble hearted deliverer. It was generously made and thankfully received; but the reflection to Robinson that he has rescued a fellow creature under such circumstances, will be to his generous heart a much richer and more lasting reward. Robinson and Chapin were placed in the boat by the spectators and carried in triumph to the village.

 The Hermit of Niagara Falls.

THE HERMIT OF NIAGARA FALLS.

June 10, 1831, the "Hermit" was drowned while bathing in the river below the falls. The following account of this singular being is abridged and condensed from one drawn up and published soon after his death.

"A young Englishman, named Francis Abbot, of respectable connexions, either through misfortune or a morbid state of mind, which made him desire seclusion, took up his residence on Goat Island, and in the neighborhood of the falls, for two years; and became so fascinated with the solitude, and infatuated with the scenery, that no inducement could divert his thoughts, or draw him from the spot, where he acquired the name of the "Hermit of Niagara Falls."

He arrived on foot in June, 1829, dressed in a loose gown or cloak of a chocolate color, carrying under his arm a roll of blankets, a flute, a portfolio, and a large book; which constituted the whole of his baggage. He took up his abode, in the first instance, at a small inn on the American side, stipulating that the room he occupied should be exclusively his own, and that certain parts of his cooking only should be done by his host. He then repaired to the Library, where he gave his name, and borrowed some books and music books, and pur-

 The Hermit of Niagara Falls.

chased a violin; the following day he again visited the Library, expatiated largely, with great ease and ability, on the beautiful scenery of the falls, and declared his intention of remaining at least a week; for "a traveller might as well," he said, examine in detail the various museums and curiosities of Paris, as become acquainted with the splendid scenery of Niagara in the same space of time." On a subsequent visit he declared his intention of staying at least a month, perhaps six. Shortly after, he determined on fixing his abode on Goat Island, and was desirous of erecting a hut, in which he might live quite secluded; the proprietor of the island not thinking proper to grant this request, he occupied a small room in the only house,—being occasionally furnished with bread and milk by the family, but more generally providing and always cooking his own food. During the second winter of his seclusion, the family removed, and to the few persons with whom he held communion, he expressed great satisfaction at being able to live alone.

For some time he enjoyed this seclusion; but another family having entered the house, he quitted the island, and built himself a small cottage on the main shore, about thirty rods below the Great Fall. On the 10th of June, 1831, he was seen to bathe twice, and was observed by the ferryman to enter the water a third time about

 The Hermit of Niagara Falls.

two o'clock in the afternoon; his clothes remaining some hours where he had deposited them, an alarm was created, and an ineffectual search was made for him. On the 21st, his body was taken out of the river at Fort Niagara, and was decently interred in the burial ground near the falls. When his cottage was examined, his dog was found guarding the door, and was with difficulty removed; his cat occupied his bed; his guitar, violin, flutes, music books, and portfolio, were scattered around in confusion; but not a single written paper of any kind was found (although he was known to compose much) to throw the least light on this extraordinary character. He was a person of highly cultivated mind and manners, a master of languages, read in the arts and sciences, and performed on various musical instruments with great taste; his drawings were also very spirited. He had travelled over Europe and many parts of the East, and possessed great colloquial powers when inclined to be sociable; but at times he would desire not to be spoken to, and communicated his wishes on a slate; sometimes for three or four months together he would go unshaved, with no covering on his head, and his body enveloped in a blanket; shunning all, and seeking the deepest solitude. His age was not more than twenty-eight, his person well made, and his features handsome.

Many spots on Goat Island are consecrated to his

 The Hermit of Niagara Falls.

memory; at the upper end he established his walk, which became hard trod and well beaten; between the Island and Moss Island was his favorite retreat for bathing; here he resorted at all seasons of the year even in the coldest weather, when ice was on the river; on the bridge to the Terrapin Rocks, it was his daily practice to walk for hours, from one extremity to the other with a quick pace; sometimes he would let himself down at the end of the projecting timber, and hang under it by his hands and feet over the terrific precipice, for fifteen minutes at a time, and in the wildest hours of the night he was often found walking in the most dangerous places near the Falls.

It is now ascertained that he was the son of the late John Abbot, (of Plymouth, England,) a member of the Society of Friends. His guitar, that beguiled so many of his solitary hours, and soothed him in his sorrow, is still preserved as a curiosity, and may be seen at Mr. Hooker's, in the village of Niagara Falls.

“Hush'd is the lyre—the hand that swept
 The low and pensive wires,
 Robbed of its cunning, from the task retires.
 Yes—it is still—the lyre is still;
 The spirit which its slumbers broke,
 Hath pass'd away,—and that weak hand that woke
 Its forest melodies, hath lost its skill.”

 Village of Niagara Falls.

VILLAGE OF NIAGARA FALLS.

The country in the immediate vicinity of the Falls on both sides of the river, presents many powerful attractions for a permanent residence. For salubrity of air and healthfulness of climate, it yields to no spot in the United States. Here,

“Nature hath
The very soul of music in her looks,
The sunshine and the shade of poetry.”

The latitude here is 43 degrees 6 minutes North, and the longitude 2 degrees 6 minutes West from Washington. The winters are generally much milder than in New England, owing as supposed, to the action of the two neighboring lakes, that lie on either side.

In a pamphlet published in London in the year 1834, written by Robert Burford, Esq., who spent the summer and autumn of 1832, in taking a panoramic view of the Falls, it is stated that this place is “without all question, the most healthful of any on the continent of North America. The heat of summer can there be borne with pleasure, while at the same time, the annoyance of musquitoes and other insects is unknown. Various are the

 Village of Niagara Falls.

conjectures whence arises the remarkable salubrity of this region; but the most natural is, that the agitation of the surrounding air produced by the tremendous Falls, combines with the elevation and dryness of the soil, and absence of swamps, to produce this happy result.”

In the summer of 1832, when the cholera raged in all the villages around, as Buffalo, Lockport, Lewiston, &c., not a single case occurred here. Again, when this disease visited many villages in the vicinity, in the summer of 1834, this place was wholly exempt.

The village of Niagara Falls on the American side, formerly called Manchester, contains about 500 inhabitants.

There are two spacious Hotels in the village, the Eagle and the Cataract, which will accommodate a large number of permanent guests. The latter is kept by Gen. P. Whitney & Sons, favorably known here in the business. Gen. Whitney has been engaged in this business for nearly 20 years. The Eagle Hotel, formerly kept by T. W. Fanning, and now by Messrs. C. B. Griffen & Co. A most splendid Hotel was commenced by the celebrated BENJAMIN RATHBUN, in the year 1836, and the foundation and basement were completed, when the astounding developement of that person's affairs rendered it necessary for him to assign all his property, and all operations on the building in question ceased. It is hoped however