

*THE NIAGARA GORGE.*

Had Dante ever seen this prodigy,  
This monstrous monument of Nature's wrath,  
Then had he found new terrors to surround,  
The entrance to Inferno. At the gate  
A power invisible becomes our guide,  
And our smooth car swings into the Abime.

The evening shades have fallen and a cloud,  
Huge, threatening, and amorphous settles down,  
Bridging the gulf. Lo! now assails our ears,  
The hissing tumult of the floods that dash,  
Writhing in agony 'twixt iron walls,  
O'er rude and torturous beds!

The uproar grows,  
And the pent waters churning into foam,  
Round adamantine boulders, scream aloud,  
Till maddened past all bound, they end the note  
In maniac glee!

Above and all about,  
Colossal cliffs their lithic brows uplift,  
To the grim skies, and horror reigns supreme!  
"Release!" "Release!" the torn waves howl beneath—  
"Give us release!"—and the harsh cliffs reply,  
With mocking echoes—their eroded breasts,  
Gargantuan laughter shakes.

And now our car  
Leaves the dread scene, and up the wall's sheer side,  
Climbs, groaning with vast effort, till we view,  
From perilous height the black gulf far below,  
And quake to ponder plunging down so steep,  
To dire destruction!