

NIAGARA: A POEM.

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Oh ! great, Oh ! grand Niagara ! how awful is thy roar !
Whatever way I turn the sound seems louder than before ;
So very near, and yet so far, above, around, below,
Like one unending thunder-peal is this incessant flow.
How terrible the turbulence of this tremendous splash !
The sinking, surging, swelling sound ! the soul-subduing crash !
That makes me feel so very sad, as if appalling fears
With giant strength had seized my brain, and paralyzed my ears.
I hear it all, I feel it, as on Table Rock I stand,
While by my side a trusty friend still grasps my trembling hand ;
I hear the mighty dashing of the everlasting spasm
With which the stormy Erie pours her floods into the chasm.
The deep, deep tones that never change—the spirit-thrilling sound—
That silences all voices else, and echoes far around :
The voice of many waters, as it falls upon mine ear
With penetrating power, proclaims—Omnipotence is here.
They tell me how the sunlight plays on yonder misty pile,
And radiant rays of rainbow tints are visible the while ;
I cannot see the grandeur, though I feel the showery spray—
The spray that falls on Table Rock alike both night and day.
Goat Island, like a monarch, stands to see the waters riven ;
And by a firm decree to us the greater share is given :
To us who live in Canada, beneath the maple tree,
To us who greatly now rejoice to find the slaves are free ;
The Horse-shoe Falls and Table Rock may poets well inspire
In Canada to fan the flame of patriotic fire.
Our neighbours have a right to boast of prairies and of powers,
But of this mighty cataract the grandest part is ours.
Let those who view this splendor dwell enraptured on the scene—
The clouds of mist, the yawning gulf, the flood so white and green ;
How wild and fierce the rolling tide that leaps from yonder rock,
And shakes this overhanging cliff as with an earthquake shock.
These boisterous, boiling waters, and this booming loud and long,
Are themes for eulogistic thought in prose as well as song.