

TWILIGHT.

WEAVER of dreams and wooer of the stars,
 Who foldest o'er the earth at close of day
 Thy gauzy robe of ever-deepening grey
 And drawest noiselessly the low-set bars
 To loosen peace upon a world of jars;
 Dusk herald of the night! prepare the way
 For that chaste queen to whom all maidens pray,
 Lest Love leave on their souls its ruddy scars;
 Thou, who hast left upon night's solemn brow
 The kiss of peace and lain on earth's sad face
 This calm of sleep's immeasurable grace,
 The last of thy sweet labours finish now;
 While birds are hush'd and sleeping every flower,
 Lead forth pale Luna from her prison-bower.

SAREPTA.

NIAGARA REVISITED.

UNTIL the other day I had not visited the Falls of Niagara since the Ontario Government and the Legislature of the Province, in conjunction with the Governor and the Legislature of the State of New York, had taken in hand the project to expropriate the lands on either side of the great Cataract, to free them from their unsightly encumbrances and the unlicensed traffic which made it dangerous for the unwary traveller to visit the place, and to reserve the region, on both sides, for the purposes of a National Park. Formerly, I had been wont to visit Niagara at least once a year, as a duty one owed to one's moral nature, in deepening the sense of awe in presence of a great natural wonder, and in stimulating the imagination by a study, from various points of view and under the changing aspects of the passing hours of a long summer's or a short winter's day, of the entrancing features of the impressive spectacle. Of recent years, however, I had wearied, not of the majesty and imposing grandeur of the sight, but of the incongruities of the surroundings, which offended at once the mind, the eye, and the pocket, and left one with an overpowering sense of the folly and infirmity of a man who, in setting out for this Mecca of the New World, would deliberately go Jericho-wise and fall among thieves. For these, I trust, appreciable reasons I had not been to Niagara for a number of years. In the meanwhile the Ontario Government Commission, as I found, had been at work, and had succeeded, to a most gratifying extent, in releasing the neighbourhood of the Falls from the vile clutch of Mammon, in thrusting out the harpies from its immediate precincts, and in consecrating the place anew to the high purposes which the spectacle is fitted to exercise.

Before this laudable task was undertaken the devotee at this greatest of Nature's shrines could hardly have attuned his mind to the harmonies of the place. The most devout worshipper, even were he himself not the victim, could scarcely fail to be distracted by the volubilities, within earshot of him, of the "touters" to a dime museum, or by the altercation between some rascally cabman and his fare, in the fleeing process to which almost everyone had then to submit. Now, it is possible to visit this great wonder of the world unruffled in temper and but little lightened in pocket. Thanks to the Commissioners, it is also possible to view the wondrous scene with the fitting accessories of art, and in the setting which it receives from Nature, plus the agreeable devices of the landscape gardener.

My present visit, in the pleasant company of an enthusiastic Old Country friend, was limited to a view of the Falls from the Canadian side. No one will hesitate to say that if the place is to be seen from one side only of the river, that side should be the Canadian. From that side you have the advantage of seeing both Falls, directly facing you, and of being able to get a close inspection of the wider and grander Cataract, with the best view of the angry sweep of the larger body of water, as it races onward, in a succession of cascades and rapids, to take its final leap into the spray-hidden cauldron of the Horse-shoe Falls. In saying this I am at the same time not indifferent to the beauty, as well as the thrilling grandeur, of the view from the New York State reservation on the American side. The view of the rapids of the American Falls from Prospect Park, and particularly from the bridge across to Goat Island, is exceptionally fine. Fine also is the outlook from some points on Goat Island of the Horse-shoe Falls; while from the bridges that connect the islands known as "The Three Sisters," the tourist will be charmed with the spectacle of the breakers above the Canadian Falls and impressed by the volume and headlong force of the waters that shoot swiftly downwards under his feet.

I repeat, however, that by far the finest and most comprehensive view is to be had from the Canadian side. The Government reservation, known as Queen Victoria Park, has a water frontage, following the river's course, exceeding two miles in length, with a fine natural background, in the wooded bluff of the Niagara escarpment, enclosing the whole in a delightful setting of green. The park extends from the comfortable hostelry of "The Clifton House," directly opposite the American Falls and close to the Suspension Bridge which gives access to the United States reservation, to a point on the bank of the main branch of the river, beyond the upper line of breakers, and a mile above the chute of the Horse-shoe. Through the park is a spacious carriage drive, and a walk for pedestrians close by the river's brink, with rustic arbours and artistic seats along its course, and the pleasant adjunct

of shade trees, fountains, springs of running water, *parterres* of flowers, and a profusion of blossoming plants. The whole park, which includes a large portion of the well-known and picturesque "Bush Estate," covers an area of a hundred and fifty acres, and not to speak of the wondrous panorama which it encloses, is in itself a delightful resort. A walk or drive through the reservation enables one to see the Falls to the best advantage, for every turn or angle in the road presents some new and unrivalled picture. At the "Rambler's Rest" you are immediately in front of the American Falls and have at your feet the yawning chasm which the wild waters have through æons of time hollowed out in the bed of the river. Here may be seen the sturdy little steamer, the *Maid of the Mist*, ferrying her live freight over the treacherous emerald waters, flecked with foam, or daringly venturing, enveloped in clouds of mist and spray, close to the seething mass which has just been precipitated over the Horse-shoe. A little further on is "Inspiration Point," from which another grand view may be had of the river and of both Falls, the Canadian one growing gruesomely upon the observer's appalled senses as he approaches Table Rock and stands peering down into the vast abyss, the rumbling thunder of the mighty fall in his ears. At this point the traveller will find his gaze transfixed by the scene of wild tumult that meets the view, the one restful spot upon which the eye can alight being the deep recess in the centre of the Horse-shoe, where the greatest mass of water appears to precipitate itself and to take on a dark green tint very grateful to the sense perceptions, wearied by the disorder and overpowered by the distractions of the scene.

But great as is the spell that holds the observer rooted to the spot, the wild uproar will be found more than he cares long to listen to, if the drenching spray have not already driven him from the place. There is a relief, too, in passing away from Table Rock, until the bewildered mind can recover its equanimity and the eye refresh itself with a change of scene, cooled by the breeze that sweeps down from the rapids in the wider reaches of the river. A short walk will bring the visitor to the bridge and gate-keeper's lodge on Cedar Island, which lies quietly moored in a bend of the stream, its luxurious vegetation kept moist and vivid by the constant spray from the Falls. After traversing the island, the mainland is regained by another bridge, and the visitor passes into the fine recreation grounds, with their exhilarating promenade in front of the White Horse Rapids. Here the walk will remind the tourist of the seashore, the wild billows of the impetuous flood, as they sweep over the submerged dykes and rocky ridges of the channel, roaring hoarsely in the ear. One seems even to scent the brine of the ocean in the heavily-charged vapours that are wafted across the angry waters. When "Tempest Point" is reached, the cascades rise to their full height and sublimity, and the scene becomes one of the wildest disorder. The thunder of the mighty Falls is here lost on the ear, so deafening is the noise from the dishevelled mass of waters rushing madly on to take their grand and final plunge.

Beyond Sumach Island a swirl of the great river circles round what is called "The Elbow," and encloses in its embrace what many will justly esteem the chief attraction of the Ontario Government reservation, the cascade-cloven Dufferin Islands. These beautiful resorts, which are named after Lord Dufferin, the Governor-General who was the first to suggest the idea of a National Park at the Falls, are reached by artistic suspension bridges thrown across the river at various accessible points. The islands have all the secluded beauty and finely-wooded character that distinguish Goat Island; and Art and the Commissioners have done much to make them attractive. The carriage drive is continued across the river-face of the islands and on, by another suspension bridge, to an extension of the reservation in front of the upper line of breakers. The interior of the island is quite idyllic. Romantic walks and pathways meander about in every direction, while cunningly devised resting-places peer out at you from their sylvan concealment in numerous nooks and corners of these enchanted islands. If your mood be placid and your fair companion consents, "The Lovers' Walk" will woo you around "The Elbow," on the inner face of the islands, where the river seems to fall into a drowsy slumber. The outer front of the islands will attract those only who revel in the tempestuous. Here the upper cascades tear madly past and the scene is sufficient to arouse to frenzy the most lethargic and unruffled disposition. Only satire could call a projecting promontory, beyond "The Cascade's Platform," "The Lovers' Retreat." Retreat it could be only to the lover who was suffering from unrequited love, for the waters here boil with fury; and no wooing couple, I imagine, would readily come within sight of the place whose course of love "ran smooth."

As a spectacle, it is needless to say, Niagara still draws. But whatever the reason—whether it be that the age, having lost its faith has lost also its capacity for wonder, or whether the public mind still treasures a memory of the Falls as the resort only of blackmailers and swindlers—visitors to the great shrine are not on the increase. Statistics, I fear, would prove that of late years there has been a great falling off. Curiously enough, what Canadian traffic there is mainly goes, it seems, to the American side. Of an excursion train, numbering some thirty coaches, from London and Hamilton, the other day, I was told that less than half a coach full found their way to the Canada shore. Only national indifference or superior American "touting" can account for that. But

where, may wonderingly be asked, is Canadian patriotism? Surely our people do not know the two facts that ought to be widely known, first, that the Falls can unquestionably be better seen from the Canadian side; and secondly, that the place has been swept clean of the land sharks, noisy showmen, and importunate hotel "runners" who used to infest the place, and that Nature's worshipper may here come and go unmolested, with none to annoy him or make him afraid. If I were to use a further argument, supposing that to be necessary, to bring our people to this great shrine of Nature, I should be inclined to adopt the words of an early English authoress, in speaking of the tranquillizing effect of the contemplation of Nature as illustrated in a scene which had greatly impressed her imagination and lifted her heart to rapture. "When I look upon such a sight as this," she exclaims, "I feel as if there could be neither wickedness nor sorrow in the world; and there would be less of both if we came oftener into contact with Nature's majesty and beauty, and were carried more out of ourselves by contemplating the sublime!"

Having seen the changes that, thanks to Col. Gzowski, Mr. J. W. Langmuir, and their fellow Commissioners, have been effected in the approaches to and in the immediate neighbourhood of the Falls, I am convinced that a wider acquaintance, on the part of the Canadian public, with the fact that these changes and improvements have taken place, would bring thousands to the spot where dozens only come now, and that all would be delighted, as I have been, with the increased attractions of the incomparable resort. If in the freer air of the New World we may not consider it the duty of Governments to be paternal, or, in the public interest, to keep theatres and opera-houses open at nominal charges for the amusement of the people, we may at least commend the enlightened act of a Government that has used the public funds for so laudable a project as the purchase and maintenance of the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park. In this beautiful national reservation it is now possible to see and enjoy one of the greatest spectacles of the world without the drawbacks which are the usual and irrevocable accompaniments of a "show-place." Once these drawbacks were a profanation, as well as a grave social offence; now that they are gone, the most fastidious may draw nigh and worship, without introducing discord into the soul or jarring the æsthetic sense.

Grave must be the mood and sober the thought of him who passes from the scene of this stupendous natural wonder. Even in the most devout-minded awe will give place to speculation as to the origin and age-progress of the mystery. What primeval time, the curious will be inclined to ask, first saw the flood settle into a river crevice, and was there human life to look wonderingly upon the scene? If life, what aboriginal tribes, and whence came they, have from first to last lived and died within sound of the mighty Cataract? Nor will the themes of the problem be exhausted in the history of the past: the future will claim to put forth its own interrogations. How far in the ages to come, some curious thought will shape itself, will the retrocession of the Falls reach, or will the coming time, by some catastrophic occurrence, or through the slowly-working changes of climate, dry up the immediate source or the remote feeding-streams of the waters? With such and similar questions did the writer perplex himself and his companion as both thoughtfully wended their way hotel-wards. Far into the night did two friends discuss the sights of the day and argue the pros and cons of the many and readily-suggested problems. The while, the moon had risen over the mysterious, half-spectral scene; and from the subterranean conduits of the mystic chasm came the ceaseless Cyclopean rumble, to tell of mysteries unseen and hush a tired world to slumber.

G. MERCER ADAM.

LETTERS FROM JAPAN.

SAYONARA.

I HAD grown a great deal too fond of it, absurdly fond of it, and suddenly I had to go away, horribly far away, and perhaps forever.

The fascination that Japan had exercised over me was the fascination of perfect *naïveté*, the fascination of a child, a quaint, unconscious, bewitching, laughing creature, singing incomprehensible melodies, doing incomprehensible things, and when the time came to say "good-bye," alas! it was like saying "good-bye" to a child. Neither Buddha, nor Tomi, nor O Mitsu San, nor even Taro San could understand in the least what I felt at leaving them and their beautiful country. I tried to tell them, but they only laughed and drew in their breath and bowed. How could they understand? How could they know all the charm of their soft ways, the delight of their fairy-land? And yet their sweet callousness was but a charm the more! I parted with them as one parts for the first time with children at the school-room door, with a sort of vague fear, an infinite regret. A new knowledge was coming to them. They were very ambitious and very blind. They would forget the old knowledge, and the old knowledge them. The old civilization was so strangely beautiful. It was quite unique. The world had never seen anything before like it, and would never see anything like it again. A civilization all naïve love, and naïve art, and naïve bravery. Was there no one who would save even so much as a Japanese bow, a Japanese compliment, from the general revolution?

I had told old Tomi in the early morning that I would probably leave by the evening's train, and then I went