

# PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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## NIAGARA FALLS IN WINTER.\*

UPON the occurrence of a thaw sufficient to break up the ice in Lake Erie, masses of floating ice, dis severed from the frozen lake and stream above, are precipitated over the Falls in blocks of several tons each. These remain at the foot of the cataract, from the stream being closed below, "and form a natura' bridge across it. As they accumulate, they get progressively piled up, like a Cyclopean wall built of huge blocks of ice instead of stone. This singular masonry of nature gets cemented by the spray, which, rising in clouds of mist as usual from the foot of the Falls, attaches itself in its upward progress to the icy wall, and soon gets frozen with the rest of the mass, helping to fill up the interstices between the larger blocks of which this architecture is composed."

This icy wall or mound rises up from the base of the torrent in a bulwark of pyramidal form, in front of the Falls, within a few feet of the edge of the precipice, to a height sometimes of from twenty to forty feet above the level of the upper stream. Scaling the mound is an exhilarating and laborious exercise; but

\*This cut is one of a series to be given in *The Methodist Magazine*, illustrating the Falls of Niagara more sumptuously than ever attempted in Canada before.



NIAGARA FALLS IN WINTER, FROM PROSPECT PARK. (From Photograph by George Barker.)

the near sight of the maddened waters plunging into the depths of the vortex below, is a fitting reward for the adventurous undertaking.

The ice bridge generally extends from the Horse-Shoe Fall to a point near the railway bridge, lasts generally from two to three months, and is crossed by hundreds of foot passengers during the winter. The ice forming the bridge is ordinarily from one hundred to one hundred and fifty feet thick, rising from fifty to sixty feet above the natural surface of the river. The tinge of the waters, from the dark green of summer, is changed to a muddy yellow; huge icicles, formed by an accumulation of frozen spray, hang perpendicularly from the rocks; the trees on Goat Island and Prospect Park seem partially buried; a mass of quaint and curious crystalline forms stands in lieu of the bushes; the buildings seem to sink under ponderous coverings of snow and ice; the tops of trees and points of rock on which the dazzling white frostwork does not lie, stand out in bold contrast, forming the deep shadows of the entrancing picture, the whole presents a wild, savage aspect, grand and imposing.

THE years write their record on human hearts, as they do on trees, in hidden, inner circles of growth which no eye can see.