

A STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.

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The Falls of Niagara are in the course of the river of that name, flowing from Lake Erie into Lake Ontario. The river above the falls is considerably wider than below. A large island (called Goat Island) divides the stream into two parts, which are called the American Fall and the Horse-shoe Fall. The former, from the water being more closed up by rocks, is six feet higher than the latter. A picturesque bridge connects Goat Island with the American shore. The space above the falls, for some distance, is called the Rapids—from the fearfully impetuous way in which the water rushes over its rocky bed.

How vast the volume of water is which flows downward in these cataracts may be supposed, when it is known that it forms the chief part of the stream of the mighty St. Lawrence before it is joined by the Ottawa. The water in the rapids—loudly roaring—leaps, bubbles, and hisses, as it rushes impetuously on with a power which no boat can stem, till it takes its final leap into the seething cauldron below. Above the rapids the river is navigable into Lake Erie.

Three men were employed in loading a small craft with sand, the youngest of whom, Joseph Ebert, was a tall, fine, active lad of eighteen. Towards evening, their task accomplished, they launched forth in their little boat to catch some fish for supper.—Seldom had they found better sport, and so engrossed did they become in it, that they did not discover that their boat was drifting down the stream. A sudden whirl of the punt, as she lifted to a wave, made them look up, when to their dismay, they discovered that they were within the power of the dreaded rapids. In vain, seizing their oars, they tugged and tugged to gain the shore—they shrieked in their despairing efforts—the waters seemed to answer mockingly. An oar broke, leaving them more helpless still. The boat striking a rock was dashed to pieces, and the next instant the waters closed over the

heads of two of the crew. One, young Ebert, yet floated—hurried rapidly along towards the falls, down which he well knew that no man had ever gone and lived. A few yards more only remained to be traversed before he must take that fearful plunge, and be no more seen; when before him appeared a log of timber firmly jammed between the rocks in the stream. By a desperate effort he grasped it, and drew himself out of the water. Night had come on; no one was likely to pass; his voice could not be heard amid the roar of the cataract. There he was discovered, still clinging, when morning dawned—about half way between the bridge leading to Goat Island and the American fall. The bridge and the neighbouring shores were soon crowded with anxious spectators. A fellow creature rejoicing in youth and strength was placed in a position of the most fearful peril. How can he be rescued? was the question.

He was so near, that it seemed almost as if a hand stretched out would save him. But the fierce rapids rushed between him and the shore, where alone safety could be found. Every one was eager to offer assistance; but among all that crowd there was no one with the practical knowledge which enabled him to render effectual aid in the emergency. Sometimes Ebert might be seen walking about on the rocks surrounding the log, as if contemplating the possibility of swimming on shore; but he was beckoned back by the spectators. A small strong raft was at length formed; and, by means of ropes, allowed to float down towards him. All anxiously watched its progress. It floated buoyantly—it was almost within his reach—in another minute he might be saved—when the rope became jammed in the rocks. A cry of regret escaped the crowd. Ebert after contemplating the raft for some time, slid down into the water, waded out until he could reach the rope, and after great labour succeeded in freeing it from the rocks. T