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A Visit to the Falls of Shewenagan.

IN the month of September 188—a brief sojourn in the ancient city of Three Rivers afforded me an opportunity which I determined not to lose, of visiting this picturesque and noble waterfall, which, although rivalling Niagara in grandeur, and infinitely more wild, remains almost unknown, save to a few "voyageurs" and travellers of the more adventurous sort.

The train, soon after leaving Three Rivers station crosses the River St. Maurice on the fine bridge which spans that noble stream. From it a picturesque view is obtained of its confluence with the still nobler St. Lawrence and the islands and channels which give its name to the old town: while in the other direction a pleasing view is obtained of a fine stretch of the river as it flows between its lofty and well wooded banks.

It must be confessed, however, that the remainder of the road by rail, which runs through a flat and sandy region, is not particularly interesting. For this reason a trip up the river by canoe, if time and other conditions permit, is much preferable; for "forest and cliff, placid and troubled waters, vast open reaches and channels twisting round islands relieve one another in charming succession."

Time, however, being an object, I availed myself of the more speedy mode of locomotion. After a run of about twenty miles, Lac à la Tortue Station, the nearest to the Falls, was reached, an unromantic spot on the flat shore of the small lake of turtle-like shape, from which it takes its name. Here a buckboard was hired, and off I started with a French Canadian Jehu on a ten mile drive across the country over another flat and sandy road to the river and the falls.

The wife of the "habitant" whose field had to be crossed between the highway and the river, gave the unwelcome intelligence that the only hotel at the Falls had been closed on the previous day. This was a sad blow to the hope I had indulged of "taking mine ease at mine inn," and especially of having ample time to explore and take in all the features of the Falls and their picturesque surroundings. However, there seemed to be nothing for it but to make the most of a short half hour before starting on my buckboard back to the lake, so as to catch the afternoon train for Three Rivers.

My Jehu, however, suggested that I need not be in so great a hurry, as the station master at the lake would take me in at his domicile. Upon this assurance I determined to take my time and also my fill of the beauties of the landscape in the bright sunlight, which happily had dispelled the mists of the morning.

My first view of the magnificent cataract was obtained through a vista formed by a long avenue cut through the forest and ending on the edge of a rocky bluff immediately opposite the falls. Below this bluff and extending between it and the basin into which the cataract plunges, there is a wide ledge of ragged rocks of various shape and height which form a striking feature of the landscape.

I happen to have in my possession three graphic descriptions in print of the falls taken by different persons at three widely-apart periods. I shall therefore not cudgel my brains in the vain hope of improving upon these, but shall present to the reader a short extract from each of these pen pictures from which he may make his choice.

I may here mention that the Indian name Shewenagan signifies needlework, suggested, it is said, by the beautiful play of colours on the foaming surface.

The first description is from the pen of a former Rector of the Anglican Church of Three Rivers, then lately arrived from England, who, with a party of friends, visited the falls so far back as early in the thirties. This shall be called the Parson's description.

The second is taken from an article entitled "A Canadian Holiday," by Sir Frederick Pollock, the eminent jurist and legal writer. This shall be designated the lawyer's description.

The third is from the facile and racy pen of our own Faith Fenton, as the falls appeared to her in 1894. This shall be distinguished as the lady's description.

To begin with the Parson's:—"There are three falls in time of high water, which, (having learned a little latin when I was a boy,) I shall nominate Shewenagus, Shewenaga and Shewenagum. Of these Shewenagus and Shewenagum, though distinct falls, meet in the chasm, tossing their discharge into the bay below. Shewenagum is the most easterly or towards the left bank of the river. Shewenagus is the middlemost, and Shewenaga, (I make her the lady from her superior elegance) is to be seen only in time of flood. Therefore as Sir Walter Scott says:—

"If you would see fair Melrose aright
Go visit her by the pale moonlight."

so do I say—

If you would see fair Shewenaga
Go visit her in the month of May.

"On ascending the portage path we descried through the trees, which at the time of our visit were not in full leaf, fair Shewenaga dancing down the slope of the hill on our right with sinuous courses. About midway she grows suddenly fretful and tosses herself headlong down a precipice of thirty feet; and then, skipping along as before, glides gently at last with the main body of the river. So much for the beauty and elegance of Shewenaga.

"But what pen shall describe the terrific contrast, the conflict, the collision, the co-thunder of the waters of Shewenagus and Shewenagum? I ascended the hill with the chasm on my right hand until I came to a point which I shall call the point of co-thunder. There, looking up, I saw Shewenagum pouring his mighty flood down an inclined plane, swift as an arrow, and Shewenagus tumbling and bounding from rock to rock to meet him, and when they met in the chasm below what a sublime and terrific scene! What rattling, roaring, tossing, boiling and foaming of waters!"

"The lawyer's description reads thus:—"Among a brilliant succession of rapids and falls on the St. Maurice, the Shewenagan Falls are pre-eminent. The river is divided into two channels by a line of islands, and these meet again at right angles, forming two distinct falls, not of the verti-