

Chapin in the rapids.

him rapidly along to the cataract. The day was beautiful, the air was gently undulated by the dashing waters, and possessed all those refreshing and bracing powers for which the Niagara atmosphere has become so much esteemed. A great number of visitors were around the island, and several were passing on the bridge. A man contending with the driving torrent, pitching over descending ridges, and rolling headlong towards the Falls, was to them a sudden and fearful sight. Quicker than the cry of 'fire!' the words flew, "a man is off the bridge, in the rapids, going over the Falls!" It fell like a shock on the ear, and all hurried to witness a fellow being in such a dreadful extremity; to see his agony; his struggle for life; his looks of despair on that terrific verge; and the plunge into the deep and foaming abyss. The eyes of all, as they assembled, became rivetted upon him, as he vainly contended against the powerful billows which were bearing him along to destruction, apparently so inevitable. It was a spectacle of thrilling interest and anxiety to the beholders. The raging waters dashed resistlessly along, and the Falls roared their hoarse and hollow moan, as he was forced over the descending steps, and every moment neared him to his fate. A small island lay at the left of his downward course, and a ray of hope arose that he might reach it. It was evident that he was struggling for that isolated spot. A moment more and he will reach the island, or pass on to that terrific plunge — it was a moment of suspense, in which the fate of a fellow being would be determined for life or death. He gained it — he rose from the water, and stood forth as one escaped from destruction. This isle is about twenty feet wide,