

NIAGARA FALLS, GREAT WESTERN DIVISION GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY

- 1 View from Prospect Point.
- 2 American Falls. View from Canadian Side. Winter Scene.
- 3 Horseshoe Falls. View from Canadian Side. Winter Scene.
- 4 View from Goat Island. Winter Scene.
- 5 Horseshoe Falls.
- 6 Illingworth View from Goat Island.
- 7 Another View from Prospect Park.
- 8 Another View from Goat Island.
- 9 View Taken Before the Falls.

NIAGARA FALLS.



VER a precipice one hundred and sixty-four feet in height, the waters of Lake Erie come tumbling in one grand plunge on their way to Lake Ontario. A grander spectacle is not to be seen on the American continent, if in all the world. Waterfalls there are of greater height, but the immense volume of all the upper lakes, with the sheer descent in one unbroken plunge, give a sublimity to Niagara that height alone cannot impart. The rapids above the Falls, the deep gorge below through which the river flows, and the many points of observation from which the scenery may be viewed, all conspire to render this resort the most celebrated on the continent.

To describe Niagara is impossible. The finest writers in the English language are compelled to acknowledge the feebleness of words in attempting to convey to their readers an impression of the grand spectacle. One of the most graceful of modern English writers, Charles Dickens, describes his feelings on first beholding Niagara, in his "American Notes," and probably no description has been more widely read or more frequently quoted. He says: "At length we alighted; and then for the first time, I heard the mighty rush of water, and felt the ground tremble underneath my feet. The bank is very steep, and was slippery with rain and half-melted ice. I hardly know how I got down, but I was soon at the bottom, and climbing, with two English officers who were crossing and had joined me, over some broken rocks, deafened by the noise, half blinded by the spray, and wet to the skin. We were at the foot of the American Fall. I could see an immense torrent of water tearing headlong down from some great height, but had no idea of shape, or situation, or anything but vague immensity. When we were seated in the little ferry boat, and were crossing the swollen river immediately before the cataracts, I began to feel what it was; but I was in a manner stunned, and unable to comprehend the vastness of the scene. It was not until I came on Table Rock, and looked—great Heaven, on what a fall of bright-green water!—that it came upon me in its full might and majesty. Then, when I felt how near to my Creator I was standing, the first effect, and the enduring one—instant and lasting—of the tremendous spectacle, was Peace. Peace of mind, tranquillity, calm recollections of the dead, great thoughts of eternal rest and happiness: nothing of gloom or terror. Niagara was at once stamped upon my heart, an image of beauty: to remain there changeless and indelible, until its pulses cease to beat forever. Oh, how the strife and trouble of daily life receded from my view, and lessened in the distance, during the ten memorable days we passed on that enchanted ground! What voices spoke from out the thundering water; what faces, faded from the earth, looked out upon me from its gleaming depths; what Heavenly promise glistened in those angels' tears, the drops of many hues, that showered around, and twined themselves about the gorgeous arches which the changing rainbows made! . . . To wander to and fro all day, and see the cataracts from all points of view; to stand upon the edge of the great Horseshoe Fall, marking the hurried water gathering strength as it approached the verge, yet seeming, too, to pause before it shot into the gulf below; to gaze from the river's level up at the torrent as it came streaming down; to climb the neighboring heights and watch it through the trees, and see the wreathing water in the rapids hurrying on to take its fearful plunge; to linger in the shadow of the solemn rocks three miles below; watching the river as, stirred by no visible cause, it heaved and eddied and awoke the echoes, being troubled yet, far down beneath the surface, by its giant leap; to have Niagara before me, lighted by the sun and by the moon, red in the day's decline, and gray as evening slowly fell upon it; to look upon it every day, and wake up in the night and hear its ceaseless voice: this was enough. I think in every quiet season now, still do these waters roll and leap and roar and tumble, all day long; still are the rainbows spanning them, a hundred feet below. Still, when the sun is on them, do they shine and glow like molten gold. Still, when the day is gloomy, do they fall like snow, or seem to crumble away like the front of a great chalk cliff, or roll down the rock like dense white smoke. But always does the mighty stream appear to die as it comes down, and always from its unfathomable grave arises that tremendous ghost of spray and mist which is never laid; which has haunted this place with the same dread solemnity since darkness brooded on the deep, and that first flood before the deluge—light—came rushing on creation at the word of God."