

NIAGARA.

Oh! what a flood of waters! broad and deep,
From distant lakes descending, till in one
Great river, over shelving ledges rough,
It leaps and rushes to the smooth green edge,
The dreadful over rolling verge, and falls
Mid spray and mist and thunder, on the rocks,
And broken, roaring billows, far below!
Oh! flood of falling waters! day and night,
The early light of morning, and the heat
Of burning noon, and shadows of the eye,
Are passing over thee, in ceaseless course;
And fad and leave thee as they come and go,
Unaltered! still the same tremendous flood
Of falling waters! Winter spreads his snows,
Upon thy rocky banks, and spring her flowers,
And summer colours fair, and autumn strews
Her withered leaves; and still amid the gloom
Of winter, and the cheerful light of spring,
And heat of summer, and autumnal shades,
Thou rollest down, the same tremendous flood
Of falling waters!

From what well spring old,
And deep, and wonderful, dost thou obtain
This mighty fulness? How can any source
Yield such supply unceasing? Every hour
Yield such an ocean! and yet day by day,
And month by month, and even year by year,
Continue unexhausted? This I asked
Upon a time, when from a rocky bank,
Washed by the rapid waters, I beheld,
The green and foaming flood, in strong career,
Go'rolling to the abyss: and as I mused
My thoughts did wander backward to the source
Whence issued all these waters. There it lay,
Stretched over half a continent; the hills
Fir-clad, and sloping to its sandy shores;
The mountains towering far along its edge:—
The broad green valleys for a thousand miles,
And caverns deep, and torrents from the rocks,
And rainy clouds of heaven, without refrain,
Emptying their gathered waters, into one
Vast inland sea:—that sea its winding way
Pursuing sometime stretched between its shores,
Wide as an ocean, sometimes rolling on
Through narrow channels, forming in its course
A chain of lakes gigantic; till at last,
The outlet gained, adown a rough decline,
Of wave-worn rocks, on to the final edge,
And over it, into the abysmal gulph.
Mist-filled, and echoing with ceaseless roar
Of sullen thunder, with tumultuous swell,
Green depths and snow-white billows, gloriously
Fall in a floodtide endless!

Musing thus
Upon this wonder, which my list'ning ear
Filled with o'erpowering music, and my eye
With form of beauty and sublimity;

My thoughts were lifted from the watery face
Of this great mirror, to the infinite
And everlasting; whose reflections bright,
I saw within its bosom—Yonder fall,
Methought, sets forth the heavenly;—in all
Its depth and grandeur, 'tis the image dim
Of the outflow continuous, and descent
Silent, but overwhelming, of all grace,
All mercy, and all peace, all light and joy,
All goodness and all blessing, from the fount
Of Spiritual fulness—that sweet spring,
High on the hill of God, which overflows
With living waters—Him who richly yields,
And freely gives to countless multitudes,
More than the tongue can utter—and all this
Continues to impart, long as the sands
Are falling in the hour-glass of Time;
And will continue to supply as long
As ages roll their waves successive, o'er
The shoreless ocean of Eternity!
Nor only this;—for while yon fall reflects
Dimly the everlasting; its wide source
Mirrors the infinite: and thus unseals
A mystery. This gives the answer true
To the deep questions; How can healing grace,
Flow without ceasing from the wounds of Christ?
Why faileth not His love? Ten thousand times
Rejected, why does He still turn on man
Compassion's look? Why is His bleeding heart,
Ne'er drained of sympathy? Ne'er drained of
grace,
To endure the sin that pierceth it afresh,
And on the hands which lacerate it oft,
To pour forgiveness? Why exhausteth not
His treasury of blessings, though He gives
Unceasingly, and why will giving ne'er
Its fulness e'en diminish? To all this
With silent eloquence, yon bright expanse
Replies,—“These rapids and the sounding fall
Unbroken, from my ocean depths proceed.
Not I created these to yield; but these,
Simply my overflows. From this learn
The heavenly mystery.” In outline faint
Thine image fair, O fountain infinite,
Thus shines upon these waters! not the form
Of source created is reflected here;
But source of all creation! not the spring
That may be fathomed, and by drain of years
Exhausted, but the great profound of God!
For Thou art God, O Christ! Unlimited
In all Thine attributes by circling bounds
Of time, degree, or space; but far above
From infinite to infinite, Thou art,
And from eternal to eternity!
Here lies the secret well spring of the wealth
Of blessing, which overflows this universe.
Love without limit, wisdom vast as love,
And power commensurate, these three in one
The everlasting cause;—the grand effect,
Creation; and Redemption of the lost!