

Cataracts depend for their sublimity, not upon the height of the falls, but mainly upon the magnitude of the volume of water. The falls, one of the grandest natural spectacles of the globe, occur, as you are well aware, on the River Niagara, which connects Lake Erie with Lake Ontario, and divides Upper Canada from the State of New York. The river, about $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile wide, first descends over a rugged limestone bed about 50 feet in less than a mile, forming rapids, and is then thrown down perpendicularly, Goat Island, near the centre of the stream, dividing the falls. The largest of these, on the British side, called the Horse Shoe Fall, from its shape, is 1800 feet broad and 153 in height; the American Fall is 600 feet in breadth and 164 feet high. It has long been supposed that the falls were first situated at the present opening of the gorge, to which the Niagara flowed in a shallow channel from Lake Erie, and that the river has been slowly eating its way backwards through the rocks for a distance of seven miles. It is known that the falls have retreated slowly during the period of modern observation. As to the problem of the falls having retreated seven miles from their original situation at Queenstown, it is very possible, were it not for one fact, viz: that at the rate at which they recede now, they must have commenced marching backwards just 30,000 years before the creation, or six times as far back as the world has been in existence. Were it not for this one objection, I think from the appearance of the banks that we should be justified in stating that the falls had once existed seven miles lower down the river. It was here last summer that I was permitted to witness the grandest sight which perhaps human eyes can behold,—the falls under the influence of a terrible thunder-storm; the two antagonistic elements of fire and water raging furiously together. It was about eight o'clock in the evening, and was as dark as night, save when the sheets of fire burst forth, and the green tint of the falls, crested with white foam stood forth in bold relief. Shortly the storm abated, and like a petted child smiling through its tears, the moon arose and shone over the misty vapour of the fall. Never before in all my travels over land or sea, have I ever beheld anything which can compare in sublimity to the scene which I that night witnessed; nor do I suppose in the whole course of my life, shall I ever be permitted to do so again.

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