

# PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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## THE FALLS OF NIAGARA.

BY THE REV. DR. DEWART.

WHILE standing on this rocky ledge,  
above  
The vast abyss, which yawns beneath my  
feet,  
In silent awe and rapture, face to face  
With this bright vision of unearthly glory,  
Which dwarfs all human pageantry and  
power,  
This spot to me is Nature's holiest temple.  
The sordid cares, the jarring strifes, and  
vain  
Delights of earth are stilled. The hopes  
and joys  
That gladden selfish hearts, seem nothing  
here.

Unique in majesty and radiant might,  
Earth has no emblems to portray thy  
splendour.  
Not loftiest lay of earth-born bard could  
sing.  
All that thy grandeur whispers to the  
heart  
That feels thy power. No words of mor-  
tal lips  
Can fitly speak the wonder, reverence,  
joy—  
The wild imaginings, thrilling and rare,  
Stupendous power! thy thunder's solemn  
hymn

Whose tones rebuke the shallow unbeliefs  
Of men, is still immutably the same.  
Ages ere mortal eyes beheld thy glory,  
Thy waves made music for the listening  
stars,  
And agents paused in wonder as they  
passed,  
To gaze upon thy weird and awful beauty,  
Amazed to see such grandeur this side  
heaven.  
Thousands, who once have here enrapt-  
ured stood,  
Forgotten, lie in death's lone pulseless  
sleep;  
And when each beating heart on earth is  
stilled,  
Thy tide shall roll, unchanged by flight  
of years,  
Bright with the beauty of eternal youth.

Thy face, half veiled in rainbows, mist,  
and foam,  
Awaken thoughts of all the beautiful  
And grand of earth, which stand through  
time and change  
As witnesses of God's omnipotence.  
The misty mountain, stern in regal pride,  
The birth-place of the avalanche of death—  
The grand old forests, through whose  
solemn aisles  
The wintry winds their mournful re-  
quiems chant—  
The mighty rivers rushing to the sea—  
The thunder's peal—the lightning's aw-  
ful glare—  
The deep, wide sea, whose melancholy  
dirge,  
From age to age yields melody divine—  
The star-lit heavens, magnificent and  
vast,  
Where suns and worlds in quenchless  
splendour blaze—  
All terrible and beauteous things create  
Are linked in holy brotherhood with thee,  
And speak in tones above the din of earth  
Of Him unseen, whose word created all.

## THE FALLS OF NIAGARA.

BY THE EDITOR.

If any jaded sight-seer wishes to  
enjoy a new sensation, we would

citing adventures the present writer  
ever experienced. Having duly feed  
the attendant, one is shown into a  
dressing-room, where he completely  
divests himself of his clothing, and

a fish in his native home. One puts  
his watch and money in a tin box,  
which he locks and fastens the key to  
his girdle. A straw hat is tied firmly  
on the head, and felt sandals on the  
feet, to prevent slipping on the rocks  
or wooden steps.

Now, accompanied by a sturdy  
guide, we go down a winding stair,  
from whose loop-holes we catch  
glimpses of the cliff rising higher and  
higher as we descend. We are soon  
at the foot of the stairway, and follow  
a beaten path over the broken debris  
which, during immemorial ages, has  
formed a rocky ledge at the base of the  
cliff. We at length reach the grand  
portal of the "Cave of the Winds."  
It is a mighty arch, nearly a hundred  
and fifty feet high—one side formed  
of overhanging cliff, and the other of  
the majestic sweep of the fall. The  
latter seems like a solid wall of water  
many feet thick, glossy green at the  
top, but so shattered and torn near the  
bottom that it is a snowy white. Be-  
neath this portal we pass. A long,  
steep stairway, covered with a green  
confervoid growth, leads down into a  
dim abyss of spray and deafening noise.  
Now the benefit of the felt sandals is  
felt; without them we would assuredly  
slip and fall. Firmly clinging to the  
arm of the guide, we go down, it seems  
almost into the heart of the earth.  
Great fragments of the seething cat-  
aract—not mere drops, but what seems  
to be solid chunks of water, rent from  
the main body—are hurled down with  
catapult-like violence, upon our heads.  
The air is filled with blinding spray.  
It drives into our eyes, our ears, and  
our mouth, if we open it. A deep  
thunderous roar shakes the solid rock,  
and upward gusts of wind almost lift  
one from his feet. A dim light  
struggles through the translucent veil.  
All communication is by pantomime—  
no voice could by any possibility be  
heard—and often the guide has almost  
to carry his charge through this seeth-  
ing abyss.

Pressing on, we cross galleries fast-  
ened to the face of the cliff, and bridges  
springing from rock to rock; and  
clambering over huge boulders, gradu-  
ally emerge again to the light of day.  
And what a scene bursts on the view!  
we have passed completely behind the  
falling sheet—not the main fall, of  
course, but the one between Goat and  
Luna Islands. We are right at the  
foot of the cataract, enveloped in its  
skirt, as it were, and drenched by its  
spray. Clambering out on the rocks,  
we can pass directly in front of it.  
When the gusts of wind sweep the  
spray aside, we get dazzling views of  
the whole height of the snowy fall,



NIAGARA FALLS.

advise him to make the descent into  
the "Cave of the Winds" at Niagara  
Falls. It was one of the most ex-

assumes a flannel bathing suit. No  
oil-cloth or India-rubber covering will  
answer here—one becomes as wet as