

carried a small quantity with him. At last, his rice gave out, and he was reduced to *tripe de rocher*.* Finally, even this resource failed, and after inhumanly suffering many of his men to die of absolute starvation, he was compelled to surrender the post with all its furs and other property. Such proceedings as these forced their opponents to like conduct in self-defence, and for several years the different bands of Indians were hired to perpetrate indiscriminate slaughter.

Thirty or forty miles northwest of Fort William, is situated the great fall of the *Portage de la Montagne*. This tremendous cataract surpasses every other in the world, save only that at Niagara. The river for a few miles above moves with a slow and calm current. When its waters arrive at this immense terrace of rock, which is fully two hundred feet in width, they are precipitated in one broad, unbroken sheet a distance of one hundred and sixty feet. For many miles the hoarse roaring of the falling waters may be heard like the heavy roll of distant thunder; and when an unclouded sun pours its beams upon the scene, prismatic rainbows flash in innumerable curves over and around them.

In the year 1815, a party consisting of some twenty men, with six canoes, in the employment of the Bay Company, were descending through that long chain of small lakes and straits which so nearly unite the waters of the Atlantic to those of the Arctic Seas. When they had arrived at the usual place of landing, for the purpose of making the portage around this great fall, they turned the bows of their boats landward, singing the while one of those beautiful and affecting songs with which these hardy and adventurous *voyageurs* were wont to beguile the time, and relieve the fatigue of their laborious way. But they found themselves suddenly set upon by a band of half breeds, under the command of white men, who had lain in ambush on both sides of the river, immediately above the falls. The struggle was fierce, bloody, and unsparing, for the canoe men were fighting for a foothold, to save them from being precipitated over the falls, and their opponents were ruthlessly determined that no living being should plant his foot upon the soil. Two of the canoes succeeded in reaching the shore, and their inmates sprung to the land, with knife and pistol in hand; but one minute sufficed for their destruction. The other four canoes were kept out by the firing and the poles of the half breeds, until the curving current struck them; and then all parties were well aware that further struggle was vain. The half breeds ran yelling with delight to the very edge of the cataract, to witness the result. The canoe men sullenly folded their arms and seated themselves in silence to await their fate. Ah! who shall say what millions of thoughts rushed through their minds in those few fearful moments? The history of their whole lives was, no doubt, spread out in one broad picture, and they commended themselves to the protecting care of their patron saints, and of the Virgin. The

* *Tripe de Rocher* is a species of lichen (or moss) much used by the Indians and voyageurs. It is prepared by boiling, is not very palatable, but a good resource when threatened with starvation. Of the lichens used as food there are four varieties, viz: *Gyrophora Proboidea*, *Gyr. Hyperborea*, and *Gyr. Mecklenbergie*. All of them are used as food, but the Indians reject all but the last.