

THE
SUBLIME NIAGARA
OF
OUR WORLD

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THE
SUBLIME * NIAGARA

—OF—

OUR WORLD.

—ADDRESSED—

To every thoughtful person who has seen the Falls,
or who desires to see them.

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THE FALLS OF NIAGARA.

FOUR

SCHOOL OF SUBLIMITY,

BY

CHESTER E. POND.

Addressed to every thoughtful person who has seen
Niagara, or who desires to see it.

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SUBLIME NIAGARA.

INTRODUCTION.

God made but one Niagara for this great world of ours.

Niagara proper includes not only the stupendous Waterfall, but many miles of life-like river. These waters are more interesting and instructive than waters elsewhere, because they have more motion and hence more real life. Things in motion are always more attractive than things at rest.

In order to get, for ourselves and for others, the greatest amount of useful knowledge from this sublime school of live waters, we must visit it many times and spend many days in a thoughtful and childlike state of receptivity. To try, as many do, to "take in Niagara in one day," is like trying to eat food enough at one meal to last a lifetime. In case it is not thought possible to spend but one day at the Falls, spend it mainly at some one important point. Familiarize yourself with every particular. Look it over again and again, and from as many different standpoints as possible. Compare distances, quantities, colors and the like, until you can carry away a correct and lasting impression of this one special place. Thoughtful persons visit the Falls not so much for temporary pleasure as for permanent soul culture. Not simply to be able to say, "I have seen the great Niagara," but to become better acquainted with Niagara's great Creator.

SUBLIME NIAGARA.

FIRST LESSON.

It is well for the student of sublimity, and of consequent humility, to take his first great lesson on Goat Island. Pass leisurely over the long iron bridge that spans the rapids on the American side. Turn to the right and walk entirely around the Island, a distance of about one and one-fourth miles, stopping at all points of interest. Study the "Rapids above the Falls" from all available places, more especially along the west shore. Near the upper end of Goat Island pause a long time at the "Three Sister Islands." In many places among these charming little islands, the water seems literally alive and wild with delight.

Goat Island divides the river and the Falls into two distinct parts, called the American Fall and the Horseshoe Fall. And the entire waters of Niagara River, quickened by the long swift rapids above, pour smoothly and gracefully over both falls even with the lower end of Goat Island. From the edge of the shelving rocks, on this and Luna Island, can be found abundant opportunities for looking directly down upon the eager going waters as they calmly plunge into the great gulf below.

Goat Island is thickly covered with timber, and contains land enough for a large New England Farm. Luna Island is on the American side of Goat Island and contains something over one acre. These two islands are separated by a very rapid stream of water, from two to four feet deep, and about one hundred feet wide. This narrow stream rushes over with such speed and momentum, that it curves out about forty feet before it strikes the jagged rocks, one hundred and sixty feet below. There is also a corresponding opposite curve, about the same distance back under the rocks, behind this narrow portion of the Falls. This forms the famous "Cave of the Winds." And from this hollow cave, Niagara's great base-

vial, come those frequent notes of heavy thunder, ever to be heard within and beneath the steady roar of the Falls. And no one can ever fully appreciate the sublime musical roar of Niagara, with a base like "seven thunders," until he has passed through this terrific Cave of the Winds. Nor can he elsewhere behold three complete circular rainbows in one concentric series. To see these rainbows in perfection, enter the cave at about two o'clock in the afternoon when the sun is shining brightly.

SECOND LESSON.

After completing your first visit to Goat Island, enter that small and beautiful park at the point of the Falls, as it were, on the American side. Here you can spend many peaceful and profitable hours in profound study. And here, too, children even, are sometimes seen sitting quietly alone, praising God in silent wonder.

THIRD LESSON.

From within this park near Prospect point, pass down the Inclined Railway to the water's edge below, and take passage on the "New Maid of the Mist." Every half-hour this nice little steamer goes rocking through the rainbows along the American Fall, passing as far up into the stormy splashings of the Horseshoe Fall as possible. (This rare and exquisite view of the baby steamer among the rainbows can be taken from the brow of Luna Island.) It presses its way up to where the driven current is so strong, and the foaming water so full of air, that the wheel has no power to carry it farther. This steamer, as we were told by the engineer, cannot possibly get within several hundred yards of that great fleecy mountain of overhanging and down-coming water.

FOURTH LESSON.

This steamer serves also as a ferry across the agitated river just below the Falls. And no one should fail to spend one whole day or more on the Canadian side. While there climb quite a high hill up to the Michigan Central Railroad track and look down into what is called the "Steaming Crater" of the Horseshoe Fall. This rare point of view can also be reached, and with much less personal fatigue, by taking the cars around by the Whirlpool Rapids, over the Michigan Central Cantilever Bridge, so famous for its great strength.

FIFTH LESSON.

While on the Canadian shore near the steamboat landing, select a comfortable seat among the rocks, and take a comprehensive view of both falls as they pour down before you in two vast sheets of dazzling whiteness. Nowhere is there a general view of the falls equal to this. Passengers on the Maid of the Mist can at any time stop over a trip or two, lay off their robes of oilcloth, and enjoy this supreme view of the Falls. The glaring sheet of water that pours over the American Fall is probably two to four feet thick; but where it plunges over in the central portion of the Horseshoe Fall, and for one quarter of a mile or more in extent, it is thought to be ten to twenty feet thick.

As these hurrying waters come tumbling and dashing over the Rapids for a long distance above the Falls, as they pour down upon the rocks one hundred and sixty-four feet below along the American Fall, and as they plunge into the deep water one hundred and fifty-eight feet below along the Horseshoe Fall, they pass through a most stupendous cleansing process. They are literally driven, beaten, and beaded into acres upon acres of heaping foam, snow white and glossy. This, to be appreciated, must be seen through storms of dashing spray

from the dripping deck of the little steamer. Much of this beautiful foam eventually floats gracefully down the river in ribbon like scroll work.

Below the Falls these deep waters now seven times purified, commingle fondly and triumphantly. They joyfully roll and inter-roll, blend and inter-blend, in peculiar shades of dark watery blue, and bright emerald green, and with a living beauty that no pen can describe nor artist imitate. Their peculiar colors on, and just below the Falls, are undoubtedly due somewhat to their unusual purity, but more especially to the unusual amount of air they now contain.

SIXTH LESSON.

From Prospect Point pass through Picnic Park to the end of the new Suspension bridge. This is a superb piece of human workmanship, and is used for carriages and pedestrians only. Walk out to the center, and while you quietly swing in puny insignificance about half way between the clouds above and the waters beneath, spend an hour or more in viewing and studying the sublime wonders of Divine workmanship below.

SEVENTH LESSON.

From the end of this bridge on the American side, pass below the paper mills and along the beautiful banks of the river on foot (the better way,) or take a street car down to the Whirlpool Rapids, about two miles below. The Whirlpool itself is still a mile or more below the Rapids. As you approach the Rapids from the high banks above, take a calm, comprehensive view of the whole scene below and be thankful for the privilege. The elevator will now carry you down to within a short walk of those irrepressible and soul-stirring Rapids. Here you can meditate in wonder, love and praise at your utmost leisure.

On the opposite bank of the river stands a two-story frame house on a high foundation. But those immense waves in the center of the river, always plumed in white, will frequently surprise you by rising and dashing sufficiently high to obscure the view of that house.

From the Falls down to these Whirlpool Rapids, the river moves slowly and majestically low down in the grandest groove ever carved in this rocky earth by falling water.

And every person who visits Niagara should understand, that all views here are liable to great and essential changes. Every strong north east wind drives the water in Lake Erie westward and this decreases its flow at the Falls. A wind down the lake increases that flow. And a difference of one inch on the brow of the Falls is said to make a difference of one foot below the Falls. The writer himself has observed changes, just below the Falls, of five or six feet within a few hours. This, of course, somewhat affects the appearance of the Whirlpool Rapids, and of all other parts of Niagara.

At the Rapids the river is very narrow, and falls some forty or fifty feet during its short passage through. Every thing that floats through these Rapids follows the center of the river. And the vitalized water itself shuns the "ragged edges" and presses fondly toward the center until it actually rounds up several feet as it goes rolling, tumbling and dancing along down into that large rock-bound basin known as the Whirlpool. This turns the water suddenly backwards to the right and left. On the right is the narrow outlet; on the left the rapid backward flow meets the more rapid downward flow, and this causes many large eddies or small whirlpools. These are clearly discernable from the high banks above. The frequent tunnels or whirlpools formed here by these opposing waters, possess sufficient power in their rapid inward and downward motion, to speedily draw under whatever comes within the sweep of any one large vortex. It was once the writers privilege to witness

the peculiar movements of a large saw-log floating in these active waters. At times it would pass entirely out of sight, then suddenly jump straight up endwise, half its length or more out of water. Whole trees are sometimes seen passing through similar movements.

EIGHTH LESSON.

While near the Whirlpool do not fail to go down its stony banks, three hundred and fifty feet, to that marvelous Outlet. Seat yourself quietly on the rocks at the very brink, and be not surprised to find, what you probably cannot find elsewhere on this round earth, that your own eyes are several feet lower than the smooth surface of the rushing water just a few rods to your left. And in spell-bound amazement, you may behold here the swift waters of the great Niagara River all compressed by rocky fastnesses, into the very narrow space of three hundred feet, and going through on a smooth and regular slant, in one grand eternal rush for several hundred feet, before they sweep down into those huge breakers below. This unparalleled mirror of rushing water, is said to be over four hundred feet deep. It reflects all surrounding colors, and seems to be in a perpetual blush of meekness and heavenly beauty. No view at Niagara is more fascinating and inspiring than this; yet, comparatively few ever take the trouble to go down and see it.

CONCLUDING LESSON

This mighty Cataract of Niagara, with its many miles of quickened waters, impressed the writer on approaching it the fifth time, (thirty-eight years after his first visit,) more forcibly than ever before, with its *vitalized power and its eternity of motion.*

Day and night, summer and winter, year after year and age after age, it never pauses one moment to rest, never ceases to roar and pour, to dash and crash, to drive on and plunge down, to jar and mar the solid earth, to wear and tear the rocks beneath, to teach and preach eternal truth, to rhyme and chime its majestic melodies, to sound off and bound up, to leap high and sweep by, to rush smoothly and blush beautifully. to chide the reckless, warn the careless and charm the timid. At times it seems to sound forth the high praises of God, and to gaze down upon you with intense brightness and deep meaning. It falls in pondrous and incomprehensible masses every hour, and never stops calling its thoughtful admirers to come where they can behold a piece of Divine Architecture, that will lead them to actually *feel* their own littleness, and to actually *realize* the greatness and goodness of their infinite Creator.

In trying to give still more appropriate expression to this eternity of motion and this divinely vitalized power, we will now sing in rythmical measures,-

A NEW HYMN,
—TO—
OUR DEAR OLD NIAGARA.

(As we approach it the fifth time.)

Roar on, roar on thou king of roaring waters—
Pour on, pour on thou queen of pouring waters—
Such heavy thunders in thy roarings!
Such endless wonders in thy pourings!

(As we walk over the long iron bridge to Goat Island.)

Leap on, leap on thou king of leaping waters—
Sweep on, sweep on thou queen of sweeping waters—
Such mighty tossings in thy leaping!
Such sightly glossings in thy sweepings!

(As we rest among the rocks and trees on the Three Sister Islands.)

Sound on, sound on thou king of sounding waters—
Bound on, bound on thou queen of bounding waters—
Such soothing sweetness in thy soundings!
Such wooing neatness in thy boundings!

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(As we study the contending Rapids along the west side of Goat Island.)

Drive on, drive on thou king of driving waters—
 Strive on, strive on thou queen of striving waters—
 Such royal turnings in thy drivings!
 Such loyal yearnings in thy strivings!

(As we stand on the smooth foundation rocks of the Old Tower, at the
 verge of the great Horseshoe Fall.)

Plunge on, plunge on thou king of plunging waters—
 Lunge on, lunge on thou queen of lunging waters—
 Such ponderous slowness in thy plunging!
 Such wonderous boldness in thy lungings!

(As we look down from the grassy verge of Luna Island.)

Wend on, wend on thou king of wending waters—
 Blend on, blend on thou queen of blending waters—
 Such winding chasms in thy wendings!
 Such shining fathoms in thy blendings!

(As we sit on the rocks of the Canadian Shore in a sunny day.)

Beam on, beam on thou king of beaming waters—
 Stream on, stream on thou queen of streaming waters—
 Such showers of brightness in thy beamings!
 Such towers of whiteness in thy streamings!

(As we approach Prospect Point in the Amerlan Park.)

Jar on, jar on thou king of jarring waters—
 Mar on, mar on thou queen of marring waters—
 Such rumbling deepness in thy jarrings!
 Such humbling steepness in thy marrings!

(As we look over the trembling wall at Prospect Point.)

Pound on, pound on thou king of pounding waters—
 Mound on, mound on thou queen of mounding waters—
 Such anvil chorals in thy poundings!
 Such grand memorials in thy moundings!

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(As we enter the Cave of the Winds on Goat Island.)

Crash on, crash on thou king of crashing waters—
Dash on, dash on thou queen of dashing waters—
Such tangled echoes in thy crashings!
Such spangled haloes in thy dashings!

(As we linger on the quivering wire bridge, one hundred and ninety feet
above the purified river below.)

Roam on, roam on thou king of roaming waters—
Foam on, foam on thou queen of foaming waters—
Such playful rollings in thy roamings!
Such graceful scrollings in thy foamings.

(As we sit quietly on the beautiful river banks, about one mile below the
Falls on the American side.)

Move on, move on thou king of moving waters—
Groove on, groove on thou queen of grooving waters—
Such awful grandeur in thy movings!
Such walls of splendor in thy groovings!

(As we view the Whirlpool Rapids from below the elevator.)

Go on, go on thou king of going waters—
Flow on, flow on thou queen of flowing waters—
Such piling billows in thy goings!
Such smiling pillows in thy flowings!

(As we stroll along the steep banks of the Whirlpool, toward a large overhang-
ing pine, that stands three hundred and fifty feet above the water.)

Whirl on, whirl on thou king of whirling waters—
Swirl on, swirl on thou queen of swirling waters—
Such peerless surgings in thy whirlings!
Such fearless mergings in thy swirlings!

Seethe on, seethe on thou king of seething waters—
Wreath on, wreath on thou queen of wreathing waters—
Such boiling acres in thy seethings!
Such coiling breakers in thy wreathings!

SUBLIME NIAGARA.

(As we sit on the rocks with our feet at the waters' edge of the Whirlpool Outlet.)

Rush on, rush on thou king of rushing waters—
 Blush on, blush on thou queen of blushing waters—
 Such matchless gradings in thy rushings!
 Such rapturous shadings in thy blushings!

(Our parting reflections.)

Chime on, chime on thou king of chiming waters—
 Rhyme on, rhyme on thou queen of rhyming waters—
 Such holy pleasures in thy chimings!
 Such lowly measures in thy rhymings!

Chide on, chide on thou king of chiding waters—
 Glide on, glide on thou queen of gliding waters—
 Such timely warnings in thy chidings!
 Such fine adornings in thy glidings!

Fall on, fall on thou king of falling waters—
 Call on, call on thou queen of calling waters—
 Such massive speedings in thy fallings!
 Such passive pleadings in thy callings!

Praise on, praise on thou king of praising waters—
 Haze on, haze on thou queen of hazing waters—
 Such plain old stories in thy praisings!
 Such rain-bow glories in thy hazings!

Farewell, farewell thou king of preaching waters—
 Farewell, farewell thou queen of teaching waters—
 Such awe Divine in all thy preachings,
 No words of mine can voice thy teachings.

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