AMERICAN SCENERY.

It strikes the European traveller, at the first burst of the scenery of America on his eye, that the New World of Columbus is also a new world from the hand of the Creator. In comparison with the old countries of Europe, the vegetation is so wondrously lavish, the outlines and minor features struck out with so bold a freshness, and the lakes and rivers so even in their fulness and flow, yet so vast and powerful, that he may well imagine it an Eden newly sprung from the ocean. The Minerva-like birth of the republic of the United States, its sudden rise to independence, wealth, and power, and its continued and marvellous increase in population and prosperity, strike him with the same surprise, and leave the same impression of a new scale of existence, and a fresher and faster law of growth and accomplishment. The interest, with regard to both the natural and civilized features of America, has very much increased within a few years; and travellers, who have exhausted the unchanging countries of Europe, now turn their steps in great numbers to the novel scenery, and ever-shifting aspects of this.

The picturesque views of the United States suggest a train of thought directly opposite to that of similar objects of interest in other lands. There, the soul and centre of attraction in every picture is some ruin of the past. The wandering artist avoids every thing that is modern, and selects his point of view so as to bring prominently into his sketch, the castle, or the cathedral, which history or antiquity has hallowed. The traveller visits each spot in the same spirit—ridding himself, as far as possible, of common and present associations, to feed his mind on the
historical and legendary. The objects and habits of reflection in both traveller and artist undergo in America a direct revolution. He who journeys here, if he would not have the eternal succession of lovely natural objects—

"Lie like a load on the weary eye;"

must feed his imagination on the **future**. The American does so. His mind, as he tracks the broad rivers of his own country, is perpetually reaching forward. Instead of looking through a valley, which has presented the same aspect for hundreds of years—in which live lords and tenants, whose hearths have been surrounded by the same names through ages of tranquil descent, and whose fields have never changed landmark or mode of culture since the memory of man, he sees a valley laden down like a harvest waggon with a virgin vegetation, untrodden and luxuriant; and his first thought is of the villages that will soon sparkle on the hill-sides, the axes that will ring from the woodlands, and the mills, bridges, canals, and railroads, that will span and border the stream that now runs through sedge and wild-flowers. The towns he passes through on his route are not recognizable by prints done by artists long ago dead, with houses of low-browed architecture, and immemorial trees; but a town which has perhaps doubled its inhabitants and dwellings since he last saw it, and will again double them before he returns. Instead of inquiring into its antiquity, he sits over the fire with his paper and pencil, and calculates what the population will be in ten years, how far they will spread, what the value of the neighbouring land will become, and whether the stock of some canal or railroad that seems more visionary than Symmes's expedition to the centre of the earth, will, in consequence, be a good investment. He looks upon all external objects as exponents of the future. In Europe they are only exponents of the past.

There is a field for the artist in this country (of which this publication reaps almost the first-fruits) which surpasses every other in richness of picturesque. The great difficulty at present is, where to choose. Every mile upon the rivers, every hollow in the landscape, every turn in the innumerable mountain streams, arrests the painter's eye, and offers him some untouched and peculiar variety of an exhaustless nature. It is in **river scenery**, however, that America excels all other lands: and here the artist's labour is not, as in Europe, to embellish and idealise the reality; he finds it difficult to come up to it. How represent the excessive richness of the foliage! How draw the vanishing lines which mark the swells in the forest-ground, the round heaps of the chestnut-tops, the greener belts through the wilderness which betray the wanderings of the watercourses! How give in so small a space the evasive swiftness of the rapid, the terrific plunge of the precipice,
or the airy wheel of the eagle, as his diminished form shoots off from the sharp line of the summit, and cuts a circle on the sky!

The general architecture of the United States cannot pretend, of course, to vie with that of older countries; yet, taken in connexion with the beautiful position of the towns, no drawing will be found deficient in beauty, while many of the public buildings especially are, as works of art, well worthy the draughtman's notice. The curiosity now generally excited with regard to this country, by its own progress, and by the late numerous books of travels, will throw a sufficient interest around every point that the pencil could present.

—— “The green land of groves, the beautiful waste,
Nurse of full streams, and lifter up of proud
Sky-mingling mountains that o'erlook the cloud.
Erewhile, where yon gay spires their brightness rear,
Trees waved, and the brown hunter's shouts were loud
Amid the forest; and the bounding deer
Fled at the glancing plume, and the gaunt wolf yell'd near.

“ And where his willing waves yon bright blue bay
Sends up, to kiss his decorated brim,
And erudite, in his soft embrace, the gay
Young group of grassy islands born of him,
And, crowding nigh, or in the distance dim,
Lifts the white throng of sails, that bear or bring
The commerce of the world;—with tawny limb,
And belt and beads in sunlight glistening,
The savage urged his skiff like wild bird on the wing.

* * * * *

“ Look now abroad—another race has fill'd
These populous borders—wide the wood recedes,
And towns shoot up, and fertile realms are till'd;
The land is full of harvests and green meads;
Streams numberless, that many a fountain feeds,
Shine, disembran'ed, and give to sun and breeze
Their virgin waters; the full region leads
New colonies forth, that toward the western seas
Spread, like a rapid flame, among the autumnal trees.

* * * * *

“ But thou, my country, thou shalt never fail,
But with thy children—thy maternal care,
Thy lavish love, thy blessing shower'd on all—
These are thy fetters—seas and stormy air
Are the wide barrier of thy borders, where
Among thy gallant sons that guard thee well,
Thou laugh'st at enemies: who shall then declare
The date of thy deep-founded strength, or tell
How happy, in thy lap, the sons of men shall dwell.”

BRYANT.
NIAGARA FALLS, FROM THE FERRY.

The best way to approach Niagara is to come up on the American shore, and cross at the ferry. The descent of about two hundred feet by the staircase, brings the traveller directly under the shoulder and edge of the American fall—the most imposing scene, for a single object, that he will ever have witnessed. The long column of sparkling water seems, as he stands near it, to descend to an immeasurable depth, and the bright sea-green curve above has the appearance of being let into the sky. The tremendous power of the Fall, as well as the height, realizes here his utmost expectations. He descends to the water's edge, and embarks in a ferry-boat, which tosses like an egg-shell on the heaving and convulsed water; and in a minute or two he finds himself in the face of the vast line of the Falls, and seizes with surprise that he has expended his fullest admiration and astonishment upon a mere thread of Niagara—the thousandth part of its wondrous volume and grandeur. From the point where he crosses, to Table Rock, the line of the Falls is measurable at three quarters of a mile; and it is this immense extent which, more than any other feature, takes the traveller by surprise. The tide at the Ferry sets very strongly down, and the athletic men who are employed here, keep the boat up against it with difficulty. Arrived near the opposite landing, however, there is a slight counter-current, and the large rocks near the shore serve as a breakwater, behind which the boat runs smoothly to her moorings.
NIAGARA FALLS, FROM THE FERRY.

It may be remarked, that the well-known stanzas on the “Fall of Terni,” in the fourth canto of “Childe Harold,” are, in many respects, singularly and powerfully descriptive of Niagara.

“ The roar of waters!—from the headlong height
Velino cleaves the wave-worn precipice;
The fall of waters! rapid as the light
The flashing mass foams shaking the abyss;
The hell of waters! where they bowl and hie,
And boil in endless torture; while the sweat
Of their great agony, wrung out from this
Their Porphyrion, curls round the rocks of jet
That gird the gulf around, in pitiless horror set,

“ And mounts in spray the skies, and thence again
Returns in an unceasing shower, which round,
With its unempted cloud of gentle rain,
Is an eternal April to the ground,
Making it all one emerald:—how profound
The gulf! and how the giant element
From rock to rock leaps with delirious bound,
Crushing the cliffs, which, downward worn and rent
With his fierce footsteps, yield in chasms a fearful vent

“ To the broad column which rolls on, and shows
More like the fountain of an infant sea
Torn from the womb of mountains by the throes
Of a new world, than only thus to be
Parent of rivers, which flow gushingly,
With many windings through the vale:—Look back!
Lo! where it comes like an eternity,
As if to sweep down all things in its track,
Charming the eye with dread,—a matchless cataract,

“ Horribly beautiful! but on the verge,
From side to side, beneath the glittering morn,
An Iris sits, amidst the infernal surge,
Like Hope upon a death-bed, and, unworn
Its steady dyes, while all around is torn
By the distracted waters, bears serene
Its brilliant hues with all their beams unshorn:
Resembling, ’mid the torture of the scene,
Love watching Madness with unalterable mien.”

BYRON.

C
VIEW FROM WEST POINT.

Of the river scenery of America, the Hudson, at West Point, is doubtless the boldest and most beautiful. This powerful river writhes through the highlands in abrupt curves, reminding one, when the tide runs strongly down, of Laocoon in the encircling folds of the serpent. The different spurs of mountain ranges which meet here, abut upon the river in bold precipices from five to fifteen hundred feet from the water's edge; the foliage hangs to them, from base to summit, with the tenacity and bright verdure of moss; and the stream below, deprived of the slant lights which brighten its depths elsewhere, flows on with a sombre and dark green shadow in its bosom, as if frowning at the narrow gorge into which its broad-breasted waters are driven.

Back from the bluff of West Point extends a natural platform of near half a mile square, high, level, and beautifully amphitheatred with wood and rock. This is the site of the Military Academy, and a splendid natural parade. When the tents of the summer camp are shining on the field—the flag, with its blood-bright stripes, waving against the foliage of the hills—the trumpet echoing from bluff to bluff, and the compact battalion cutting its trice-line across the greensward—there are few more fairy spots in this working-day world.

On the extreme edge of the summit, overlooking the river, stands a marble shaft, pointing like a bright finger to glory, the tomb of the soldier and patriot Kosciusko. The military colleges and other buildings skirt the parade on the side of the mountain; and forward, toward the river, on the western edge, stands a spacious hotel, from the verandahs of which the traveller gets a view through
the highlands, that he remembers till he dies. Right up before him, with the smooth curve of an eagle's ascent, rises the "old cro'nest" of the culprit Fay, a bright green mountain, that thrusts its topmost pine into the sky; the Dondebarak, or (if it is not sacrilege to translate so fine a name for a mountain,) the Thunder-chamber, heaves its round shoulder beyond; back from the opposite shore, as if it recoiled from these, leans the bold cliff of Breknock; and then looking out, as if from a cavern, into the sun-light, the eye drops beyond upon a sheet of wide-spreading water, with an emerald island in its bosom; the white buildings of Newburgh creeping back to the plains beyond, and in the far, far distance, the wavy and blue line of the Kattskills, as if it were the dim-seen edge of an outer horizon.

The passage through the highlands at West Point still bears the old name of Wey-gat, or Wind-gate; and one of the prettiest moving dioramas conceivable, is the working through the gorge of the myriad sailing-craft of the river. The sloops which ply upon the Hudson, by the way, are remarkable for their picturesque beauty, and for the enormous quantity of sail they carry on in all weathers; and nothing is more beautiful than the little fleets of from six to a dozen, all tacking or scudding together, like so many white sea-birds on the wing. Up they come, with a dashing breeze, under Anthony's Nose, and the Sugar-Loaf, and giving the rocky toe of West Point a wide berth, all down helm, and round into the bay; when—just as the peak of Crow Nest slides its shadow over the mainsail—slap comes the wind aback, and the whole fleet is in a flutter. The channel is narrow and serpentine, the wind baffling, and small room to beat; but the little craft are worked merrily and well; and dodging about, as if to escape some invisible imp in the air, they gain point after point, till at last they get the Dondebarak behind them, and fall once more into the regular current of the wind.
TRENTON FALLS.

(VIEW DOWN THE RAVINE.)

TRENTON FALLS (called Cayoharic by the Indians) are formed by the descent of a considerable stream, known by the name of West Canada Creek, through a mountainous ravine of singular formation and beauty. The Creek, which is swollen to a tremendous torrent by rains in the mountains, or by the spring thaws, has evidently worn through the strata which now enclose it, and runs at present over a succession of flat platforms, descending by leaps of forty or fifty feet from one to the other, and forming the most lovely chain of cascades for a length of three or four hundred miles. The walls that shut it in are either perpendicular, or overhanging it in broad table ledges; the wild vegetation of the forest above, leaning over the chasm with an effect like foliage of a bright translucent green, painted on the sky.

Although but fourteen miles distant from a town containing twelve or fourteen thousand inhabitants, Trenton Falls were unknown till within a very few years. They were discovered by an artist in search of the picturesque, and are now visited, like Niagara and Terni. A quiet but excellent inn, which contrasts strongly, by its respectful service, and its neat and secluded air, with the noisy and carelessly kept hotels of the country, stands on the edge of the pine forest, a little back from the brink of the chasm; and being off the business line of travel, and requiring a little time and expense to reach, it is frequented principally by the better class of travellers, and forms a most agreeable loitering-place, either for the invalid, or the lover of quiet leisure.

In company with the artist to whom the public is indebted for these admirable drawings, I lately visited the ravine by moonlight. We had passed the day in