

## CHAPTER V.

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### NIAGARA FALLS.

The "gals."—Buffalo.—The churches.—St. Patrick's church.—The lapdog.—The railway accident.—The runaway slave.—Roasting and shooting niggers.—Niagara falls.—Goat or Iris island.—The Horseshoe Fall.—Fishing.—The tower.—The American Falls.—Mr. Geo. W. Sims and the ferry.—Canadian and American manners.—The lost hat.—Canadian and American prosperity.

"Buffalo gals! can't ye come out to-night,  
Can't ye come out to-night, can't ye come out to-night?  
Buffalo gals! can't ye come out to night,  
And dance by de light of de moon!"

How little I thought, only a few months ago, when I used to sing these unmeaning words to their beautiful air, that I should ever visit the distant Indian village to which they referred:—a distant Indian village, I imagined it, somewhere in the backwoods, but I did not know where; and I pictured it to myself composed of wigwams, built of wood, and overshadowed by eternal forests beside one of those great inland seas of America which Europeans scarcely

know by name ! Such were my musings as, passing from the crowded wharves and canals of Lower Buffalo, I sauntered up a handsome street, one hundred and twenty feet broad and two miles long, and, thence, to the more retired streets and squares on the higher ground. Here I overlooked the broad Lake of Erie at my feet ; the green hills of Canada before me ; and, at the distance of a few miles on my right hand, the far-stretching expanse of Lake Ontario. It was a beautiful morning ; the sun shone brightly athwart the clouds that, ever and anon, sent down slight showers to wet and refreshen the air. The raindrops danced and glistened on the laburnum and acacia blossoms and the trellised roses that peeped over the garden walls that enclosed a little space in front of almost every house. We had staid here to rest on the preceding day ; and, on this, Whit-Sunday, we were seeking out a place of Catholic worship.

And here, I first observed the systematic grouping of churches which seems to obtain almost everywhere in the United States. You may pass a village, perhaps, though rarely, that

that has no church at all ; but if it has one, it will certainly have four. In the towns, churches stand in groups of four, as near together as possible. It is the spirit of competition. As one lawyer in a village always makes work for two, so does one sectarian preacher provoke a religious feeling which others are required to satisfy with opposing doctrines.

The Catholic churches do not appear to form part of these groups. I discovered that Buffalo was the seat of a bishop, and contained four English and Irish, one French and two German Catholic churches. I made my way to St. Patrick's—then the largest church, though a magnificent cathedral was being raised near it. The building was crowded—almost to suffocation. The congregation appeared very respectable:—all were very clean and well-dressed. Yet I was told that almost all were Irish emigrants escaped from starvation and forced idleness at home. I lingered about the door, as the congregation went in and came out ; yet, amongst three thousands of Irish, not one asked for alms !

The preacher's Irish accent declared his ori-

gin, although he had been in the United States long enough to acquire American phraseology: for example; while recommending good will and amity amongst nations, he told them not to imitate “Balaak *canvassing* Balaam to curse the Israelites”. The word “*canvassing*”, in such a sense, must have been picked up on this side of the Atlantic! Then, referring to the festival of the day, the preacher gave us a very tolerable burst of declamation on the universality and uniformity of his faith: assuring the poor wanderers from a distant land that, as they had found the same religion at Buffalo, so, “far as the winds blow or the waters roll, it is to be found the same everywhere as here.”

The number of our pets was lessening. Another of our canary birds died at Buffalo. Our poor little dog had been ailing during the greater part of the voyage out; and though it had seemed to recover at times, so as to excite the admiration of many who again stopped us here offering to buy it (which seems, in this country, to be thought a delicate, complimentary way of expressing admiration), it now

grew much worse and died in the course of this night. My wife and children happily foresaw not the greater trials they were to undergo; and were much afflicted by this loss of another of their pets. A lap-dog had died in my family at Florence twenty years before; and its mistress, an elderly lady who sat up with it, had declared that, the instant her dog expired, the night lamp had suddenly gone out! Carlo was buried in the garden of the Hôtel Fetherstonhaugh at Florence: little I then thought that, twenty years later, I should see another pet lap-dog taken from my apartment and buried in the garden of the Exchange Hotel at Buffalo!

This was a tolerable inn close to the railway station (which had been its recommendation to me), or close, rather, to the point where the Rochester Railway runs into the town. We witnessed a sad consequence of the unenclosed, unguarded state of these precincts:—a little boy had been playing and clambering about on one of the cars, when it was put in motion. He fell, and the wheels went over both his thighs. The poor child was carried

to our hotel, and laid in a lower room : a surgeon attended, and much sympathy seemed to be felt for him. But it was evidently impossible to save his life ; and he died on the following day. His poor mother was in a state of distress that may be imagined :—a distress aggravated by the refusal of the surgeon to permit her to see her child, lest the interview should agitate him. Cruel caution to both !

The mother was standing outside the door ; while one of my sons, who was passing the open window, heard the little sufferer cry, “ Mother ! mother ! why don’t you come to me ? ”

“ She will come to-morrow ”, some one said soothingly ; “ but it would make you worse if she came to night.”

“ I don’t care if I am worse ”, he cried ; “ for if I die, I shall go to heaven. But I want to see mother ! ”

Cruel caution, indeed ; which, under no circumstance, could avail to save life ; and the propriety of which would be very doubtful, even if it were certain to have the desired effect. Woe to those who thrust themselves between relatives on their death-bed ! Woe