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Niagara Falls

A Graphic Description of this Great Natural Wonder—Mayor Wylie's Address before the Library Association.

The public meeting of the Library Association last Friday night was well attended, quite a number turning out to hear the able addresses of Mayor R. E. Wylie and Dr. Biddridge, pastor of the First Baptist church. Mayor Wylie's subject was, "Some Impressions of my Recent Trip to Niagara Falls and Canada"; and that of Dr. Biddridge, "What is a Book." The address of the latter will appear in our next issue. The remarks of Mr. Wylie, as kindly reported for The News by Mr. Pressley Robinson, were as follows:

Accompanied by my daughter I boarded the train at Lancaster on the 19th of June last en route for the International Sunday School Convention at Toronto, Canada. We took the Seaboard Air Line at Chester, where we were joined by others also bound for the convention. At Hamlet, N. C., we were joined by the party from Columbia and other points in S. C. Dr. Pelham, President of the South Carolina Sunday School Association, headed the South Carolina delegation. The North Carolina party also joined us here and we all went together to Norfolk, Va., and

from there to Baltimore by boat. From Baltimore the North Carolina party went by the Pennsylvania Railroad to Buffalo, New York. We took the Baltimore and Ohio and thence the Lehigh Valley Route for Buffalo also. The Lehigh Valley Route traverses some of the most beautiful scenery in Pennsylvania.

We stopped over at Buffalo principally to see the great Niagara Falls. The most impressive sight I have ever seen is these great falls. I had visited Niagara Falls once at a time when my mind was plastic, and strange to say I did not have the faintest idea of what I saw then; the reason was, I was but six months old at the time, but I won't say how long that has been.

I have heard of the falls on the Canadian side and on the American side and the Three Sister Isles, and I had about the idea of it that a lady told me of the impression it made on her—a whole lot of water falling down—this is about the idea I had of it before I saw it.

We got to Niagara in the afternoon and went down the next morning. The first thing that attracted my attention was the terrible roar of the waters coming down. We went down through Prospect Park to the brink of the rapids above the falls. Niagara Falls were fifteen or twenty years ago noted only for their scenic wonder, but electric power has been developed there, and now Niagara is a city of commercial importance.

The shredded wheat biscuit that is found on many of our breakfast tables is manufactured there. The entire process of

manufacturing the biscuit is done by machinery, the hand not touching it all, as it goes through the various stages from wheat to biscuit. As before stated the first thing that attracted my attention was the terrible roar, it was like a thousand mills. We went over to Green Island from Prospect Park. Fortunately I did not go below the falls in going over to Green Island, I went above. We crossed above what is called the American Falls, and to see the water plunging down is a wonderful sight. To give some idea of the rapidity with which the water descends, I will mention that the water which goes over the falls comes through the four lakes—Superior, Michigan, Huron and Erie. It enters the falls from Lake Erie, and is the only avenue through which the water from all those lakes is conveyed to the Atlantic ocean. The fall of the water is about one foot to the mile for about six miles, and then for a mile before it reaches the ocean it is eighty feet to the mile. It is not the rocks that make the rapids, it is the narrow channel through which the water flows and the rapid descent. The water fairly revolves and rolls the whole time. On this trip we did not see the falls at all from below but on the return trip we did, and that is where it presents the fine view. One strange feature is that the river at Niagara runs about east and west, although the general course is from south to north. Strange to say after the water falls over the cataract, instead of continuing the course as before, the channel of the river turns abruptly, at right angles to its former course, and flows directly north

to Lake Ontario. We went from Green Island over to Goat Island, the main island that divides the river. The northern shore is the American side of the river. About nine-tenths of the water that goes over the falls is on the Canadian side. The contour width of American falls is about 1060 ft, depth 167. The contour width of the Horseshoe or Canadian Falls is about 3000 ft, depth 158 ft. The American Falls have a greater elevation than the Canadian Falls for the reason, it seems, that the greater volume of water is on the Canadian side, hence it has worn the rocks more on that side than on the American side. On the return trip I saw it on the western side, and there you can see the whole fall at once, in front of you and on the left you see the American Falls. After the water leaps over into the gorge it turns to the right, angling a distance of seven miles and empties into Lake Ontario.

A number of pleasure boats ply on the river, below the falls, one of which is called the "Maid of the Mist." We took a trip up under the falls on this boat, after enveloping ourselves in a rubber coat and hat to keep from getting wet, and then went on around the horse shoe falls. If it were not for those rubber suits one would get wet. It is not dangerous at all. The boat fairly rocked as it passed through the foamy waters. The great thing about the gorge is that the falls have been gradually moving up the river for ages. It was once seven miles nearer Lake Ontario than now. Geologists have tried to compute the wear during a year, and estimate that it is from two to four feet a year, so that it

must have taken ages to have reached from lake Ontario to its present site.

One curious thing receded is the geysers. You stand there and hear explosions. You see those spouts of water, those things are constantly going up, sometimes higher and sometimes lower. As the water falls air is carried down by the water for a hundred or a hundred and fifty feet and air bubbles are formed which unite under the water and as they come up to the surface they explode and the water is thrown high into the air and is perfectly white, its white appearance being caused by the air.

The Horse shoe falls is in the shape of a horse shoe, or rather it once was in that shape. The nature of the erosion has caused the apex to become more V shaped. Nine-tenths of the water going down on the Canadian side wears the rock more than on the American side. As the geysers burst, water is dashed against the base of the cataract over which it falls, thereby eroding the soft shale underneath, undermining the rock above and this being softer than the rock above is eroded and then in the course of time the bedrock of the river breaks off and falls down below. This is the cause of the falls gradually receding from their original position.

I had always somehow had the idea that the Niagara Falls was considered one of the seven wonders of the world, but I learned this summer that it is only one of the seven wonders of the United States, Luray Caverns and the Natural Bridge in Virginia and the Mammoth Cave in Kentucky being among others of