

## CHAPTER II.

*Distant and near View of the Falls of Niagara.—Whether the Falls have receded from Queenston to their present Site.—Geographical Features of the Region.—Course of the River above and below the Falls.—Recent Proofs of Erosion.—Historical Data in the Works of Hennepin and Kalm.—Geological Evidence derived from Fluvial Strata or Remnants of an old River-bed in Goat Island and elsewhere.—Difficulty of computing the Rate of the retrograde Movement.—Varying Hardness and Thickness of the Rocks undermined.—Future Recession.—Age of the Drift and Limestone Escarpments.—Successive Changes which preceded and accompanied the Origin of the Falls.—Reflections on the Lapse of past Time.*

*Aug. 27.*—WE first came in sight of the Falls of Niagara when they were about three miles distant. The sun was shining full upon them—no building in view—nothing but the green wood, the falling water, and the white foam. At that moment they appeared to me more beautiful than I had expected, and less grand; but after several days, when I had enjoyed a nearer view of the two cataracts, had listened to their thundering sound, and gazed on them for hours from above and below, and had watched the river foaming over the rapids, then plunging headlong into the dark pool,—and when I had explored the delightful island which divides the falls, where the solitude of the ancient forest is still unbroken, I at last learned by degrees to comprehend the wonders of the scene, and to feel its full magnificence.

Early in the morning after our arrival, I saw from the window of our hotel, on the American side, a long train of white vapoury clouds hanging over the deep