

the name of *elfs*. These untamed waters charge themselves with air in their multiplied falls, and thus obtain a silvery colour; in their mid-course, however, they become more limpid, and assume a deep blue or emerald tint, according to the nature of the soil over which they flow. Certain rivers preserve a torrent-like character for the greater part of their course, as the traveller does not fail to observe in the rivers of the Pyrenees, Scandinavia, and Scotland. In the latter country we may point to the Spey and the Tay as sweeping onward in fall and rapid from their source almost to their mouth. Such streams, it is almost unnecessary to remark, however pleasing to the artist and the lover of the picturesque, are of no commercial value, and can only be navigated for a short distance from their point of termination.

Undoubtedly a *Cascade* is one of the most attractive spectacles which Nature presents to the admiration of man. Its waters, from the summit of a rugged precipice, seem to hurl themselves into space, but descend into the chasm beneath with a bewildering rush and thunderous roar, which confound the senses and appall the imagination. Or it appears to the spectator a mere strip of silver ribbon outlined on the mountain-side, which rapidly narrows, and finally disappears in mist and spray. If the sunlight falls upon its vaporous clouds, it changes them into coruscating diamonds, or irradiates them with ever-shifting and undulating rainbows.

“ 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 edges, 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.” *

We shall now pass in review some of the most picturesque and impressive of the world's Cascades and Cataracts, briefly describing their peculiar characteristics.

One which justly claims the admiration of the tourist, and has employed and inspired the pencil of many famous artists, is the cascade of Gavarnie or of Marboré, in the French Pyrenees. Ascending the Gave de Pau, we reach the ridge or table-land of the Pimené, which separates the two valleys of Estaubé and Gavarnie. The Gave traverses a series of defiles, ever increasing in narrowness, and of basins, ever decreasing in magnitude, as we mount towards its source. All these basins were formerly lakes, whence the waters fell, stage after stage, in terrible cataracts, before they had hollowed out the channel in which they now-a-days flow.

* [Byron, “ Childe Harold,” canto iii.]