

the Thames leaping boldly into the gulf, and there forced to change its direction, and flow from the right to the left bank, and then rush roaring and boiling through the hills, he may have some idea of what takes place at this the most wonderful sight I have witnessed in Africa."

In descending into the narrow abyss already spoken of, the cataract breaks into five separate streams, which send up, to an elevation of 200 or 300 feet, as many volumes of luminous vapour—shafts of shivering spray and foam, which in the sunlight are gloriously wreathed with the rare hues of Iris.

The natives call these falls, in allusion to their vaporous clouds and thunderous roar, Mosooatunya—that is, "*smoke* does *sound* there." They were anciently known by the appellation of Shongwe, which appears to have meant "a seething caldron." Its columns of smoke are visible at a distance of five to six miles, and might lead an American traveller to imagine himself in the vicinity of a burning prairie.

Celebrated in story will be the *Ripon Falls*—so named by Captain Speke\*—which carry the infant stream of the Nile, in a channel 150 yards broad, over a barrier of igneous rocks 12 feet high.

Speaking of the Nile, we may add a few details in reference to the cataracts which occur on its course through Nubia into Egypt. They are six in number; but though called *cataracts*, are more properly *rapids*, in which no considerable descent is made, no sudden perpendicular plunge; but the river pours along an inclined plane, divided by rocks into several narrow passages, where the waters rush with great velocity, forming numerous eddies and whirlpools. From the violence of the current, the ascent of the river at these points is a matter of difficulty, and even of danger; and the native boats are frequently swamped in their efforts to pass the first and most formidable cataract.

"The Nile! the Nile! I hear its gathering roar,  
No vision now, no dream of ancient years,—  
Throned on the rocks, amid the watery war,  
The king of floods, old Homer's Nile appears."—(LORD LINDSAY.)

The commencement of the cataract has been expressively described as a complete archipelago of granite rocks, some red, others black, and all shining in the sun, as though highly polished, with various torrents rushing between them in all directions. These rocks are of the most extraordinary forms; now awful, now grotesque; they look as ancient as the earth itself—the very skeletons of the antediluvian world. On the western bank the sands of the Great Desert, yellow as gold, and broken by the action of the wind into rolling waves, descend to the water's edge, interspersed with great masses of black basalt; on the east, crag rises above crag in such chaotic confusion that one can only suppose the scene to have resulted from some volcanic explosion.†

Mr. Eliot Warburton furnishes an amusing narrative of his adventures in effecting the passage of the first Cataract.‡

\* [Captain Speke, "A Journey to the Sources of the Nile."]

† [Mrs. Romer, "Temples and Tombs of Egypt," etc.]

‡ [Eliot Warburton, "The Crescent and the Cross."]