

Some idea of the volume of water may be gathered from this fact: the Niagara River a mile and a half above the Falls is two and a half miles wide, and is there very deep. At the Falls all this water is narrowed to about 800 yards in breadth. A traveller already mentioned \* thus describes her impressions:—

“Nor do I think that the most powerful imagination can, with its greatest effort, attain even an approximate notion of the awful sublimity of this natural wonder. Like all other stupendous things which the mind has been unaccustomed to measure and to contemplate, Niagara requires time to grow upon one. The mind also demands time to struggle up to its dimensions, and time to gather up its harmonies into the mighty tones which finally fill the soul with their overwhelming cadences, and whose theme, ever-varying but still the same—as in the hands of a Handel or a Beethoven—thunders through the whole extent of one’s being—‘Almighty Power!’

“The chief impression produced upon the mind by Niagara is the perpetuity of immeasurable force and grandeur. This it is which lends such a strange fascination to the Falls; however pressingly one is desirous of getting away, one is obliged to turn back again, and yet again, like the disturbed needle to the magnetic pole. There is nothing in the way of natural scenery which has stamped itself so clearly, indelibly, and awfully on my mind as this gigantic magnificence; as this mighty body of waters, gliding stealthily but rapidly on its onward course above the Falls, springing forward more wildly, more exultingly, as it nears the brink, until it leaps over into the abyss to swell the mighty cataract, which, for thousands and thousands of years, by day and by night, through every season, has ascended in tones of subdued thunder to the Creator’s throne.”

Passing over all intermediate points, the traveller at length reaches the Garden City, Chicago. This, which used to be counted a western city—it is 900 miles west of New York—is now considered almost an eastern one. And it must be remembered that this place of half a million souls is a port. Large sailing-vessels and steamers enter and leave it daily, and through Lake Michigan and the chain of other lakes can reach the ocean direct. There are miles on miles of wharfs, and it is generally considered one of the “livest” business places in America. Handsomely laid-out and built, the city now hardly bears a trace of the terrific conflagration which in 1871 laid three-fourths of the finest streets in ruins.

From Chicago to Omaha the various routes have little to interest the ordinary traveller, and so, while speeding on together, let us dine in a Pullman hotel car. On entering you will be presented with a bewildering bill of fare, commencing with soups and finishing with ice-cream and black coffee. The dinner is served on little separate tables, while the purity of the cloths and table napkins, the brightness of the plate, and the crystal clearness of the glass-ware, leave nothing to desire. You can have a glass of iced water, for they have an ice-cellar; you can obtain anything, from a bottle of beer to one of Burgundy, port, or champagne; and cigars are also kept “on board;” while at the particular point indicated you will not pay more than seventy-five cents (about three shillings) for the dinner. It must be admitted that the liquid refreshments are generally very dear: a “quarter”

\* Margharita Weppner.