

## CHAPTER II.

### THE RIVER AND ISLANDS.

IN its immense water-flow, its grand scenery and historic lore, the Niagara is one of the most renowned rivers of the world. The single outlet of the great inland seas : lakes Superior, Huron, Michigan, St. Clair and Erie, together with their hundreds of tributary streams, comprising a water surface of 500,000 square miles, more than one-half the fresh water of the globe, must justify such distinction. On its course from Lake Erie, for three miles, the river is only one-half mile in width, varying in depth from twenty to forty feet, and with a current flowing nine miles per hour over a rock bottom. At the end of this distance the shores recede, until reaching a width (measuring across Grand Island) of eight miles from shore to shore. Here the flow of waters is more peaceful, yet diligently the large volume glides along to its precipitous leap. Two miles above the Falls, where the river is about two miles wide, the flood of waters commence, between contracting shores, a wild rush for the cataract, thus increasing its velocity to fifteen miles per hour before taking its awful plunge. From that point to the verge of the falls, the descent is fifty-seven feet, and then a perpendicular fall of 164 feet into the boiling abyss below. These two miles of