



Picturesque America; or, the land we live in

a delineation by pen and pencil of the mountains, rivers, lakes, forests, water-falls, shores, cañons, valleys, cities, and other picturesque features of our country ; with illustrations on steel and wood, by eminent American artists

Bryant, William Cullen

New York, 1874

Chicago And Milwaukee.

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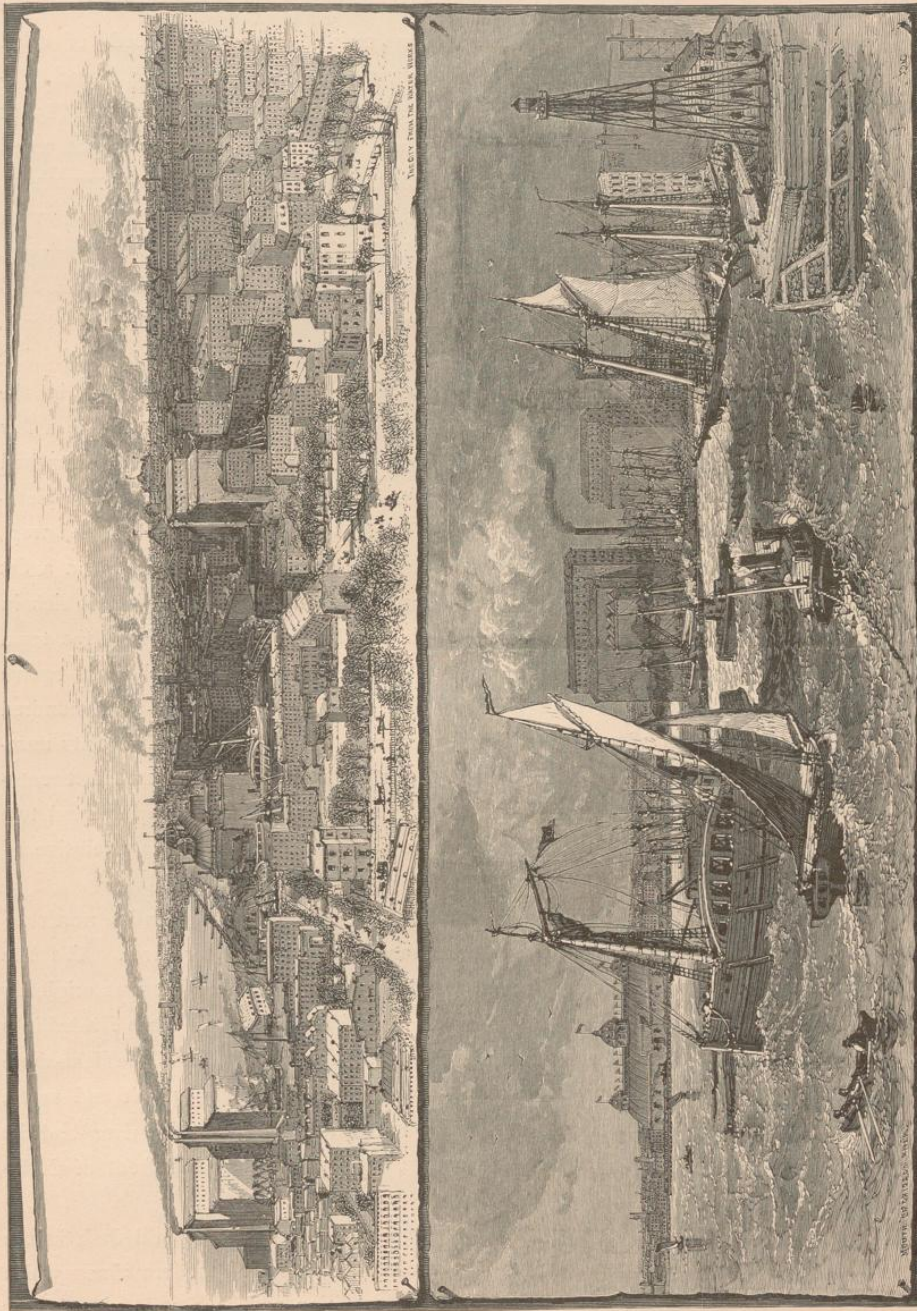
CHICAGO AND MILWAUKEE.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALFRED R. WAUD.



Glimpse of Lake Michigan.

CHICAGO is as incomparable, in its own way, as Rome. Its history is as brilliant as it is brief, and, of all young American cities, it is the most famous. Less than half a century ago it was an Indian trading-station, with a mixed population of one hundred whites, blacks, and red-men. Long before the site was visited by a white man, it was, as we learn from "THE AMERICAN CYCLOPÆDIA," a favorite rendezvous for several Indian tribes in succession. The earliest recorded were the Tamaroas, the most powerful of many tribes of the Illini (whence the name of Illinois). The word Chicago is Indian, probably corrupted from *Checcaqua*, the name of a long line of chiefs, meaning "strong," a word also applied to a wild-onion that grew plentifully on the banks of the river that now winds through its busy streets. Let us accept only the first interpretation

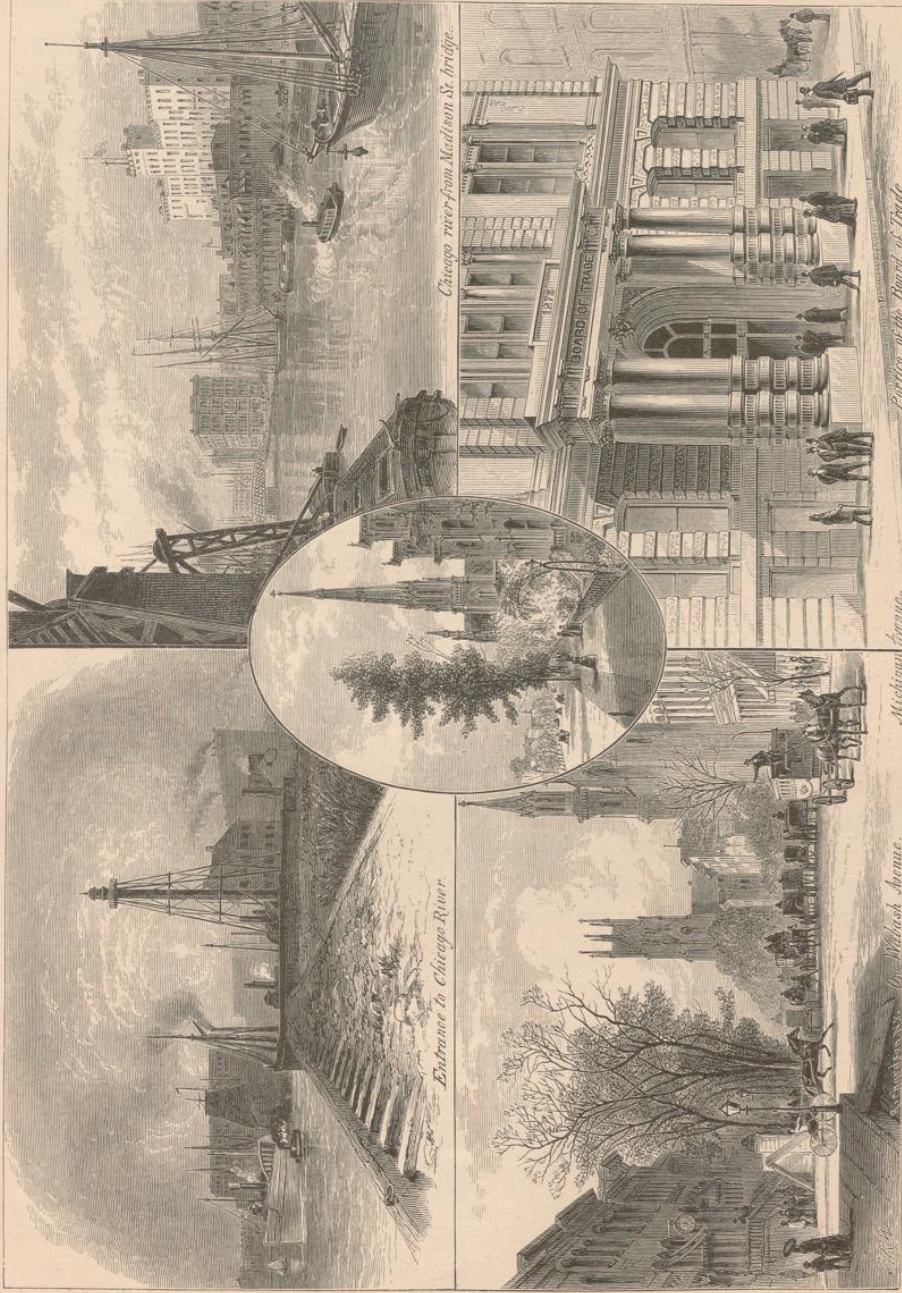


CHICAGO.

of the word, and see in the present glories of the city a transmitted worth from the dusky heroes that once assembled on the spot for words of wisdom or deeds of valor. It was first visited by Marquette in 1673, and shortly afterward by other French explorers. The first geographical notice occurs in a map dated Quebec, Canada, 1683, as Fort Checagou. A fort was built by the French, and abandoned when Canada was ceded to Great Britain. Fort Dearborn was built in 1804, by the United States Government, on the south bank of the Chicago River, near its mouth. In 1812, when the war with Great Britain broke out, the government ordered the fort to be abandoned, fearing it could not be held. The garrison and others marched out, and, when a mile and a half from the fort, were attacked by the Pottawattamie Indians, who massacred sixty of them, including two women and twelve children, and then destroyed the fort. In 1816 the fort was rebuilt, and demolished in 1856. Chicago scarcely advanced a single step in the hundred and fifty years that followed the landing of Marquette. For a long time a few rude timber huts and a mission-house, on the low banks of the creeping stream, comprised the settlement. It had no natural beauties to invite immigrants with a taste for the picturesque. Few trees sheltered it from the hot shafts of the sun. North, south, and west, the prairie reached to the horizon; and, from eastward, Lake Michigan rolled in on a flat beach, with mournful reverberations. But, if it was deficient in beauties, it was rich in natural facilities for commercial intercourse. With the filling up of the West, the town began to show the natural advantages of its situation. In 1831 it contained about twelve families besides the garrison in Fort Dearborn, but in 1833 it contained five hundred and fifty inhabitants. In 1837 it was incorporated as a city, when the inhabitants numbered four thousand one hundred and seventy. In 1850 the population reached twenty-eight thousand two hundred and ninety-six, in 1860 one hundred and nine thousand two hundred and sixty-three, and in 1870 nearly three hundred thousand souls, exclusive of the suburban. It is now the fifth city of the Union.

Chicago is situated on the west shore of Lake Michigan, eighteen miles north of the extreme southern point of the lake, at the mouth of a bayou, or river. The site of the business portion is fourteen feet above the level of the lake. It was originally much lower, but has been filled up from three to nine feet since 1856. It is divided into three parts by a bayou, called the Chicago River, which extends from the lake-shore about five-eighths of a mile, then divides into two branches, running north and south, nearly parallel with the lake, about two miles in each direction. The river and its branches, with numerous slips, give a water-frontage, not including the lake-front, of thirty-eight miles.

The destruction of the larger part of Chicago by fire, in 1871, is still fresh in the memory of every reader—a conflagration the most destructive of modern times, which was followed by a rebuilding of the city with an expedition and in a style of splendor that have made it the marvel of the age. Almost the entire business and much of the



Chicago river from Madison St. bridge.

Entrance to Chicago River.

Board of Trade.

Michigan Avenue.

Wabash Avenue.

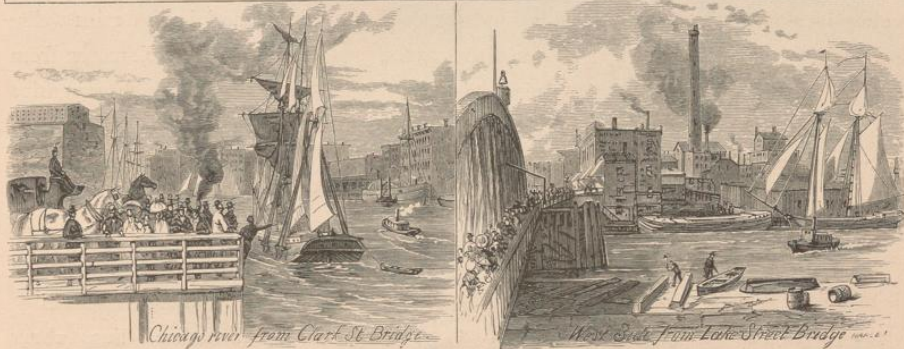
SCENES IN CHICAGO.

residence portion of the city were destroyed, the burned area covering nearly three and a half square miles, the number of buildings destroyed being over seventeen thousand, including the Court-House, Custom-House, Post-Office, forty-one churches, thirty-two hotels, ten theatres and halls, the total loss being estimated at one hundred and ninety million dollars.

Upon these ruins has arisen a city of singular beauty. It cannot be claimed, in the rapidly-constructed architecture of the city, that the best taste has always been followed. An excess of trivial ornament is everywhere apparent. But the business portion of the city has fewer evidences of bad taste than elsewhere, while the general effect of the façades is striking and even admirable. In all other American cities there is an unpleasant incongruity in the architecture—splendid warehouses cheek-by-jowl with mean ones, tall structures jutting up by short ones. This unhandsome irregularity is prevented in Paris by municipal regulation, and has for the most part been avoided in Chicago, inasmuch as all the structures are new, erected according to the latest taste and most developed ideas in architecture, and because the builders have seemed to act with some sort of coöperation. The view on the next page, entitled "Madison Street," gives a good idea of the beauty of the façades in the new business portion. This fact gives Chicago the palm among American cities in an important particular.

Our American cities are not usually picturesque. Their sites were selected for commercial convenience; hence they are generally flat. Time has not yet mellowed their tints, nor age given quaintness to their structures. Long rows of handsome business façades, and avenues of embowered cottages, however gratifying to their citizens, do not supply the stuff which the soul of the artist hungers for. But Chicago has one very striking picturesque feature. This is its river, winding through its heart, lined with warehouses, filled with vessels, and crossed by bridges. Here is a grateful change to the monotony of stone and mortar; here are animation, rich contrasts of color and form, picturesque confusion—all that sort of stir and variety that an artist delights in. This river one encounters in almost any direction that he may proceed; and one who loves to watch moving ships, hurrying boats, bustling shores, thronged bridges, can amuse himself for hours in studying the ever-varying picture. There are thirty-three of these bridges; but, ample as this communication might seem, the impatient citizens found that the draws of the bridges were so constantly open for passing vessels that, in order to facilitate connection with different parts of the city, tunnels have been constructed under the river. These add a novel and interesting feature to the city, as well as greatly facilitate intercourse between the parts separated by the river.

A very beautiful portion of the city was not destroyed in the great conflagration. This included several fine avenues of residences extending toward the south. Wabash Avenue and Michigan Avenue are as famous as Fifth Avenue of New York, although not resembling that famous thoroughfare. They are of a semi-suburban character, lined



SCENES IN CHICAGO.



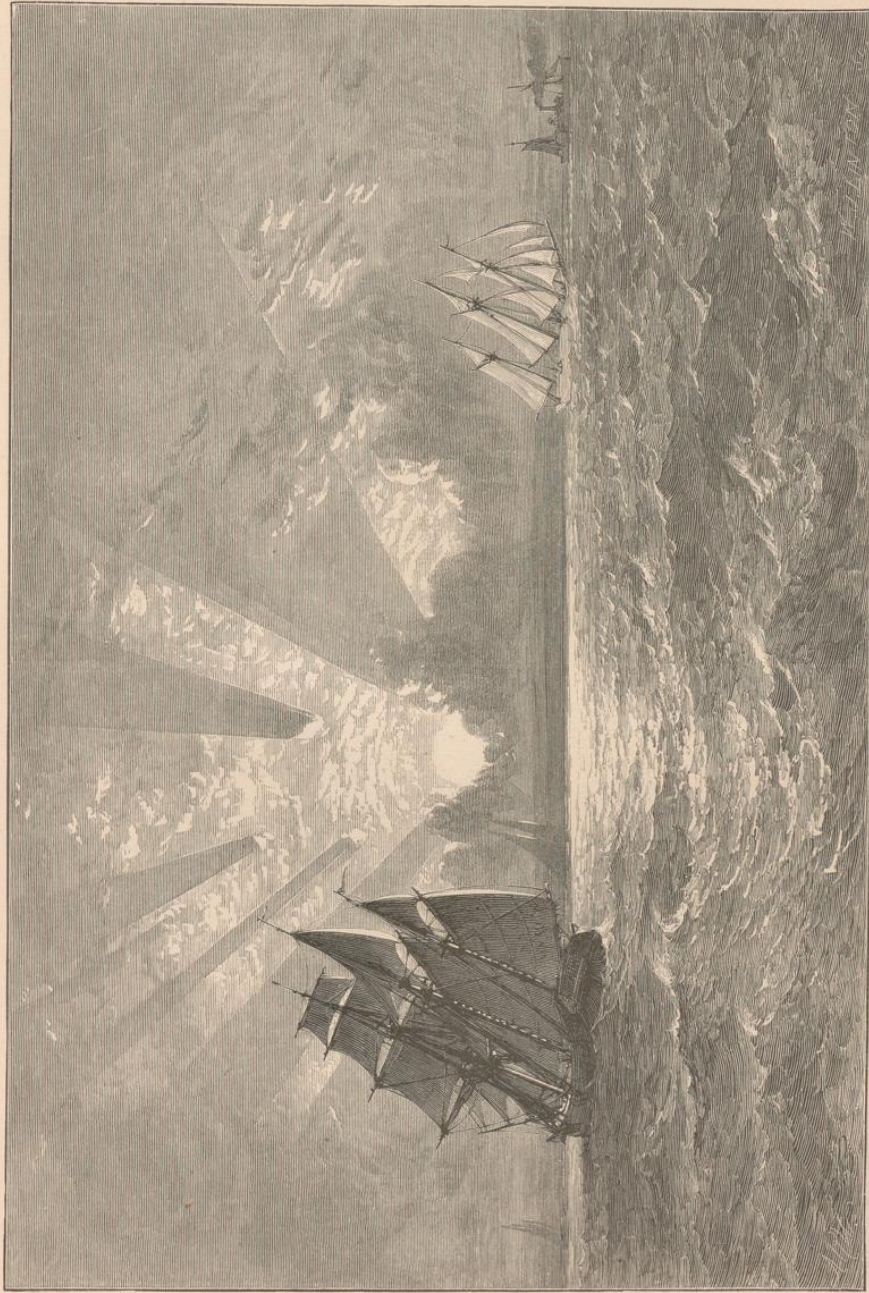
Clay Cliffs, Shore of Lake Michigan.

with tree-shadowed villas and mansions, and fine churches; and here, at all fashionable hours, may be seen gay throngs of carriages, equestrians, and pedestrians.

Chicago has a noble system of public parks, covering an area of nineteen hundred acres, and numbering six distinct enclosures. All are not yet completed. One park lies on the lake-shore, and affords a delightful drive by the green-tinted waters of the great inland sea. Lincoln Park is very charming, with its little lake, its winding stream crossed by many pretty little bridges, its sylvan glades, and its wooded knolls; and Jefferson Park has similar charming features.

Among objects of interest are the great tunnel for supplying the city with water from the lake; artesian wells; towering grain-elevators, from the tops of which expansive views may be had; immense stock-yards; and the usual educational, literary, and art institutions that in every American city spring up side by side with the material interests.

Milwaukee lies about ninety miles directly northward from Chicago, with



SUNSET, LAKE MICHIGAN.

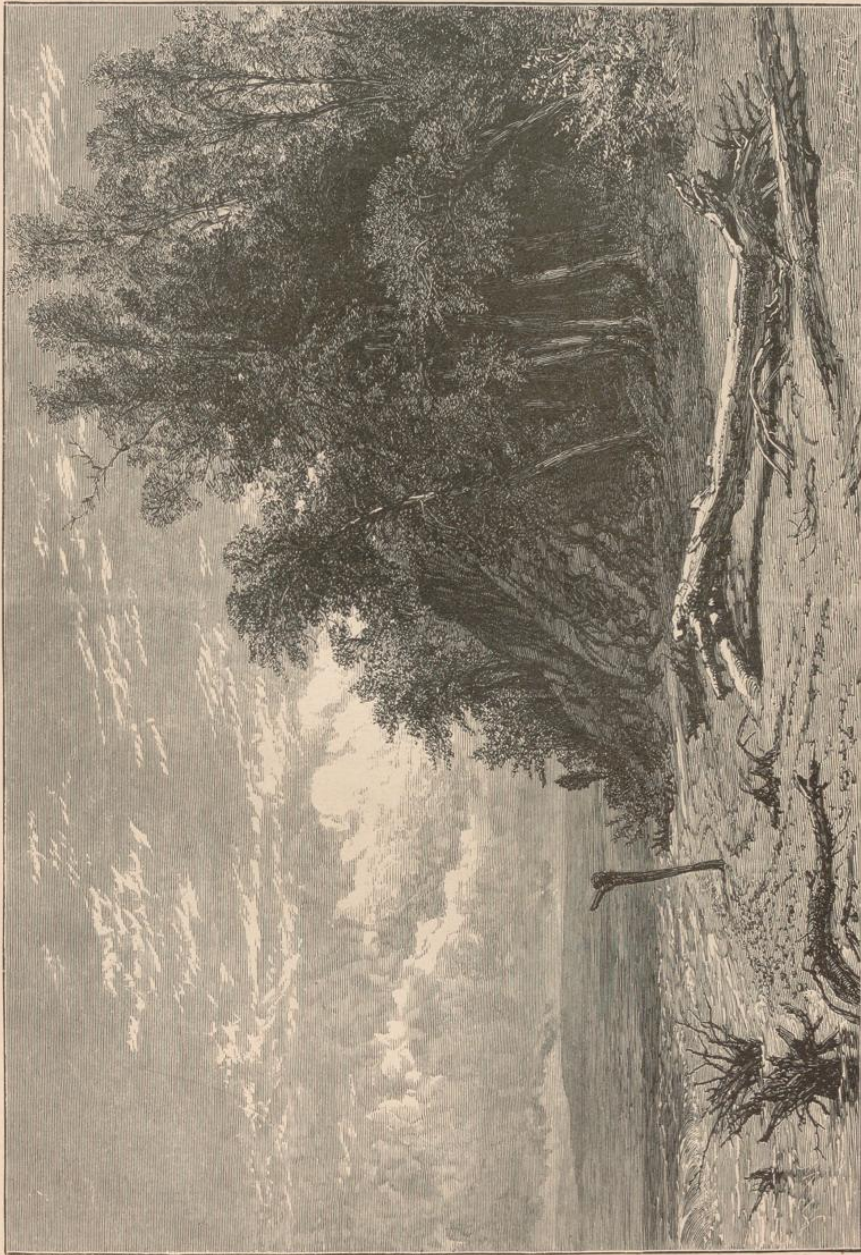
which there is communication both by rail and by steamers. The sail is very pleasant, and occupies only a few hours. If you leave Chicago in the evening, you may see one of the lake-sunsets of which so much is heard—a sunset in which the sun descends behind rolling banks of clouds, shedding the most gorgeous hues on the sky and on the sea. On the way northward the shore of the lake assumes extraordinary forms, especially at a suburb of Chicago called Lake Forest, which is about twenty-eight miles from the city. Here the ground is soft and clayey, and the constantly encroaching surf has worn it into curious columns and peaks, some of them twisted and seamed in the most astonishing fashion. The forms are constantly changing under the action of the



Shore of Lake Michigan.

water, and we are told that, after a gale, during which the surf has been very high, the appearance of the shore is almost completely changed in many places. At one point, a bank reaches to the water in sharply-serrated ridges, which have the exact appearance of miniature mountain-ranges. The narrow line of sandy beach is often strewn with wrecked trees that have been torn from their beds and still hold their leaves. A more melancholy sight than these wanton ravages of Nature present can scarcely be imagined. A short distance from the shore, however, the country is very picturesque, and many Chicago merchants have chosen it as the seat of their summer villas.

Occasionally the shore rises into a noble bluff, sinking again into a beach, with a



THE SHORE AT LAKE FOREST.

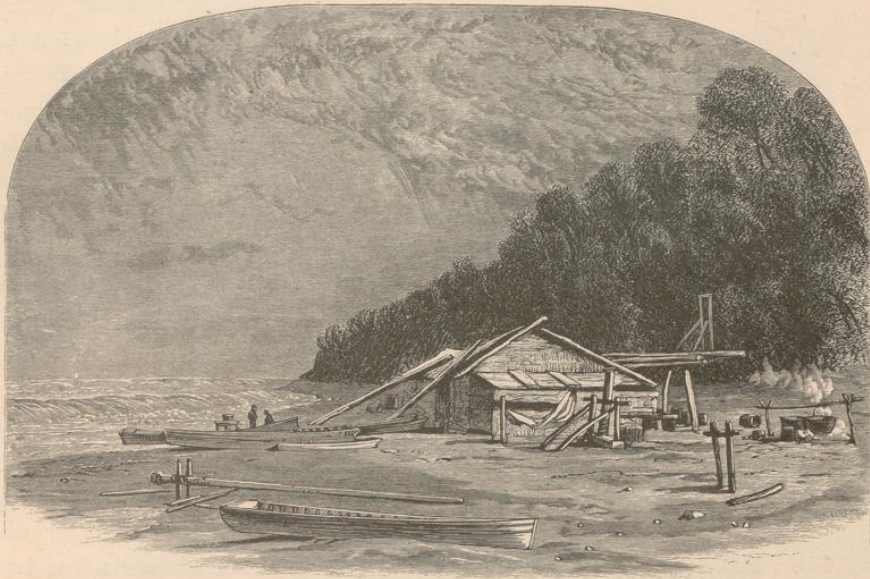
gloomy wood in the rear. There are several towns and villages on the route, with here and there a white fishing-station, consisting of a rude hut on a low beach, and half a dozen row-boats. The most important of the towns are Kenosha and Racine. Kenosha lies some fifty miles north of Chicago; it is situated on a high bluff, has a good harbor, and the surrounding country is a beautiful, fertile prairie. Racine, which lies seven miles farther to the north, is in size the second city of the State of Wisconsin in population and commerce, and is noted for a good harbor. It is situated at the



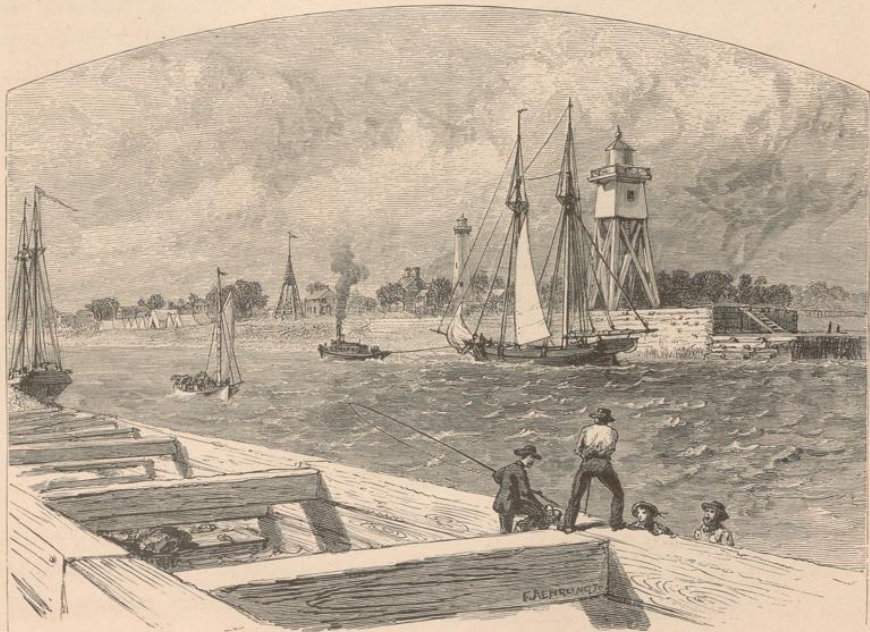
Lake Michigan, near Lake Forest.

foot of Rock River, on a plain forty feet above the level of the lake, and is handsomely laid out in wide and well-built streets. Immense piers, stretching far out into the lake, are a characteristic feature. Racine has a college named after the place.

Milwaukee, like Chicago, is prepossessing. It is the commercial capital of Wisconsin, and has a population of nearly eighty thousand souls. Like Chicago, too, it is divided into three districts, East, West, and South, by a junction of the Menomonee and the Milwaukee Rivers. The area embraced is seventeen miles square, and contains



Fishing-station.



Kenosha Harbor.



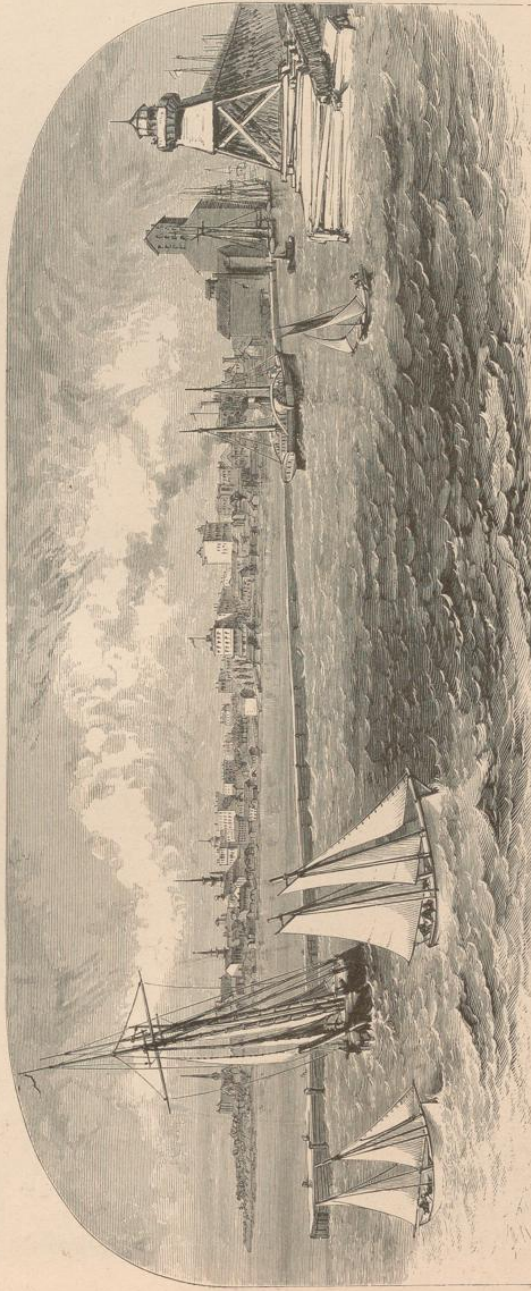
Kenosha.

one hundred and sixty streets, with fourteen thousand dwellings in nine wards. The river has been dammed, and its banks are the site of several important industries. The ground is more hilly than in Chicago; and Milwaukee, in some particulars, may claim to be the prettier. A large proportion of the population consists of Germans, who give the city a distinctive character and appearance. The Americans say that they are like the inhabitants of a village, and are all familiar with one another's names and business. But, while the visitor is constantly confronted by German signs, and his ears are constantly filled with German sounds, Milwaukee people have the noticeable briskness of manner peculiar to the Northwest.

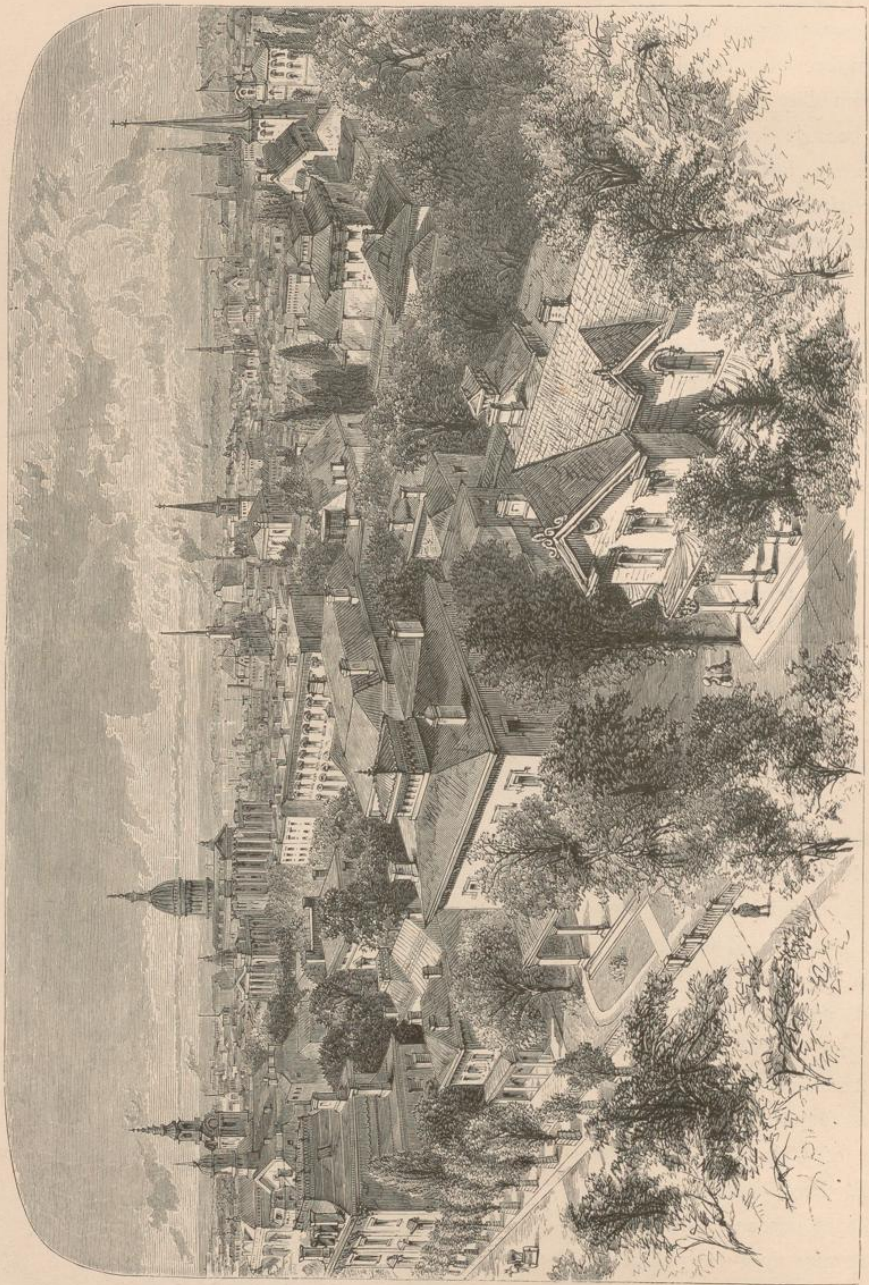
The city has so many domes, turrets, cupolas, spires, and towers, that you might imagine yourself in some Mediterranean port, especially if it happened that you had never been in a Mediterranean port. The architecture is diverse in the extreme, combining the most widely-different styles; but it is invariably ornate, and lavishes plaster statuary, plaster and iron castings, scroll-work, and filigree, without distinction,

on the smallest and largest buildings. As we all know, Milwaukee is called the "Cream City of the Lakes," not because it is famously lactescent, but because the color of the brick used is a delicate yellow. This material produces some very pretty effects, and is used very largely. The outlying residence-streets are well sheltered by trees and shrubbery, and most of the houses have large gardens in the front and rear, with ample porticos reaching out. Grottos and arbors are also found in many gardens, the arbors sometimes being of the most curious form, enlivened by the brightest paints.

The river is navigable for the largest class of lake-vessels two miles inland from the lake, and is spanned by several bridges. The wharves are substantially built out of wood, and are lined with handsome and extensive structures, vastly superior to those found on the waterfront of Chicago and New York. Propellers of a thousand tons' burden are moored at the very door-ways of the newest and finest warehouses, and their gangways lead con-



Rachne.



CITY OF MILWAUKEE.



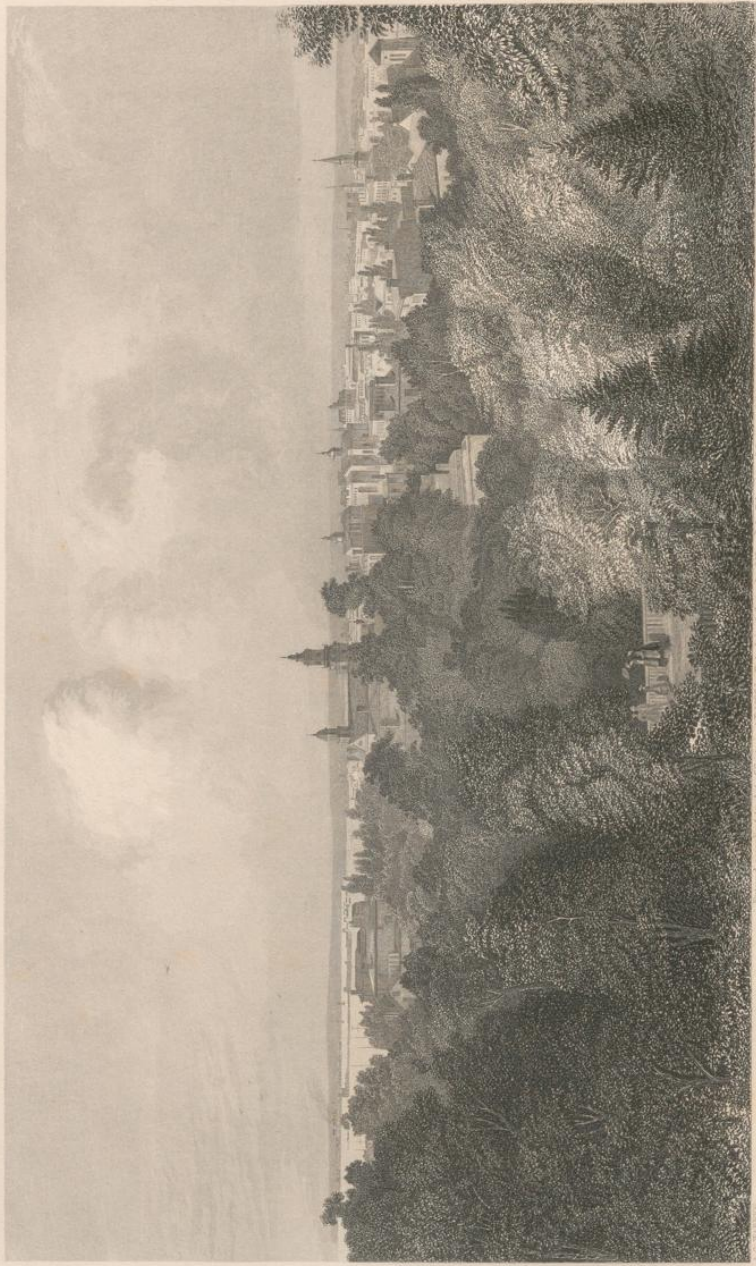
MILWAUKEE RIVER, AT MILWAUKEE.

veniently into the best markets. The river, indeed, is an attractive resort, and a pair of four-oared shells are often to be seen pulling briskly among the fleet of steamers and sailing-vessels ever moving in the stream. Milwaukee manufactures nearly three million gallons of lager-beer annually. Immense brick breweries, capacious beer gardens and saloons, abound; but the beer-drinkers are church-goers, and support sixty religious edifices, of various denominations, besides many excellent literary institutions and schools. Among the curiosities of the place are the elevators, which have a storage capacity for five million bushels of grain, one of them alone having a capacity for one million five hundred bushels. There is also a flouring-mill, which grinds one thousand barrels of flour daily. But we cannot even mention all the things that are to be seen in Milwaukee, and can only add that, as it is one of the most charming, it is also one of the most active and prosperous of the cities in the Western country.

The name "Milwaukee" carries in its sound the evidence of its Indian origin. It is a modified spelling of "Milwacky," the designation given by the Indians to a small village near the site of the present city, and is said to signify "rich or beautiful land." Like so many of the Western cities that we carelessly call new and young, Milwaukee has a history reaching far beyond the time of written records. Not only are there relics here of very ancient Indian habitations, but the mounds found and opened near the town show unmistakable proofs of the residence of an even earlier race, whose very traditions are now extinct.

The authentic and recorded story of the site of the city is, it is true, very brief. We have no mention of any earlier visitor of European race to this region than Father Marquette, the indefatigable French explorer, who came here in 1674. After him, very few, except Jesuit missionaries and occasional traders, visited the place, until the beginning of the present century. In 1818 a trader of French descent settled in the Indian village of Milwacky—one Salomon Juneau, whose family were the only white inhabitants until 1835. After the Black-Hawk War, when the Indians were pressed farther to the west, others came and settled near Juneau's block-house. George Walker and Byron Kilbourn appear to share with the Frenchman the honor of founding the actual town. From their village to the Milwaukee of to-day is a change too often repeated in our Western cities to continue a matter of wonder.

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Engraving according to the drawing by J. J. Applegate, taken in the office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington.

City of Milwaukee

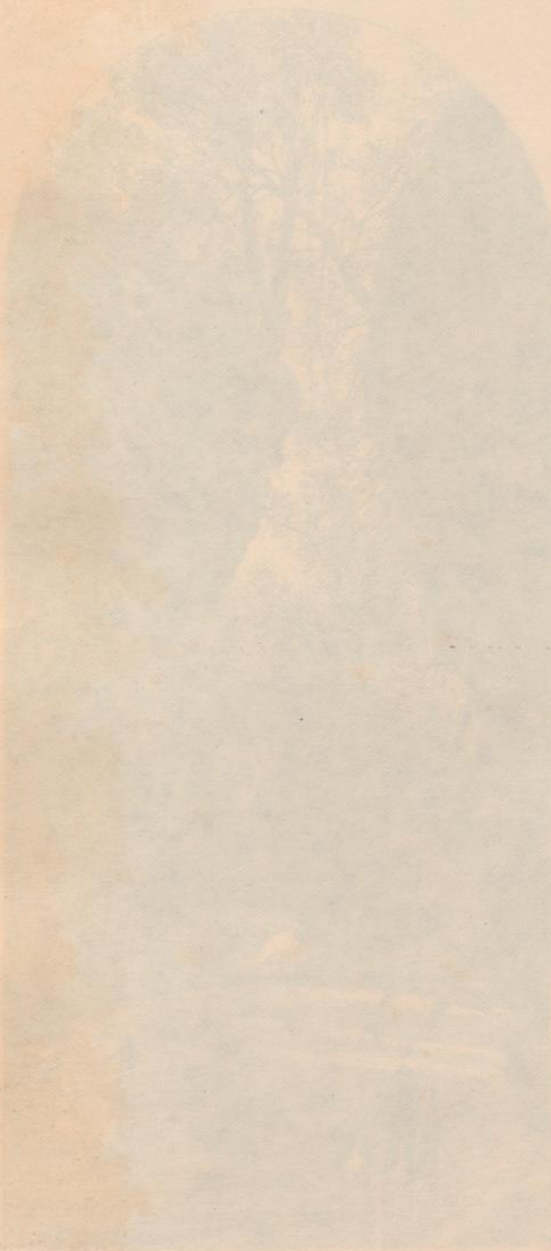
New York: D. Appleton & Co.

A GLANCE AT THE NORTHWEST.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALFRED R. WADE.

WISCONSIN could not generally regard the beauties of their State, and submitively listen to a good deal of random talk about her backwoods and prairie wastes, that people who have not been there ignorantly refuse. For a purchase, when you are planning a summer's vacation, you should first visit the most frequented routes of travel, you cannot do better than spend a week or longer to a journey that includes many most picturesque scenes than these backwoods and prairie wastes. Go round the great lakes for instance; visit the Voyageur at one of the lake ports — the Menominee, or Sheboygan — and your way to the Wisconsin River by the Central Wisconsin Route.

The guide-books and gazetteers have not little to say on the subject. The notes that will here be given, however, are the natural features peculiar to the State in the mountains of its elevation and the shape of its square, which is neither mountainous nor hilly, but gently undulating. The river Wisconsin has its entire course within the State, and



By Alfred R. Wade.

