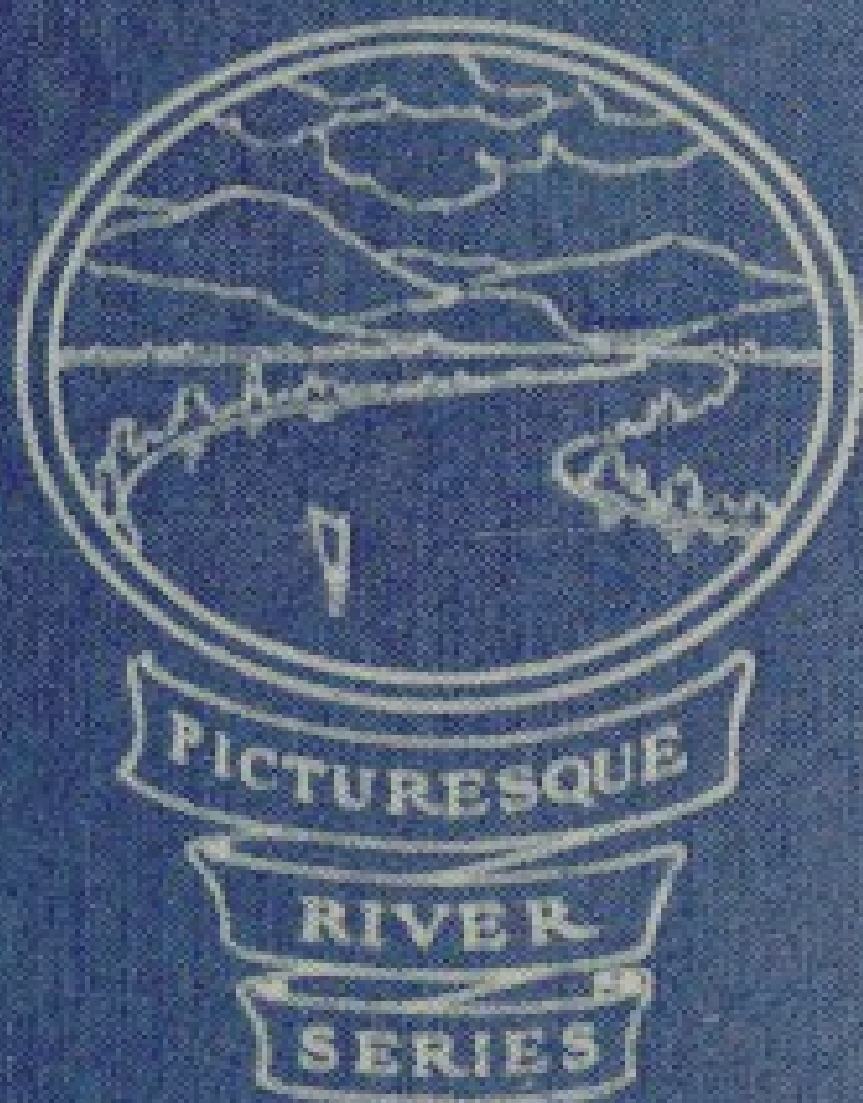


THE PICTURESQUE ST. LAWRENCE

CLIFTON JOHNSON



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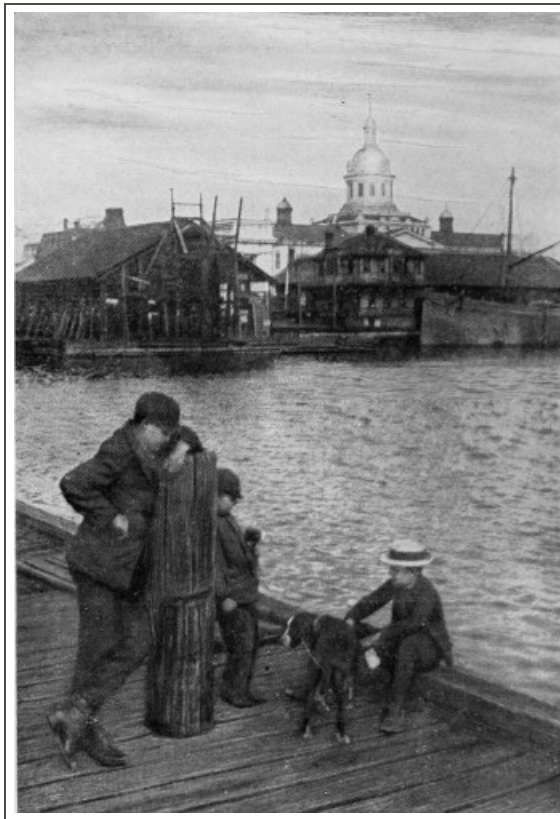
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THE PICTURESQUE ST. LAWRENCE

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
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TORONTO



Beside the St. Lawrence at Kingston

[To List](#)

**THE
PICTURESQUE
ST. LAWRENCE**

***WRITTEN AND
ILLUSTRATED BY
CLIFTON JOHNSON***

***PICTURESQUE
RIVER SERIES***



THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

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THE PICTURESQUE ST. LAWRENCE

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Introductory Note

It is believed that the volumes in this Picturesque River Series are sufficiently comprehensive in their text to make them distinctly valuable as guide books; and at the same time they are compact enough in size not to be burdensome to those who wish to carry them in trunk or bag. There is, of course, no attempt to give a detailed catalog of all the charms of any particular stream, for that could only be done at a sacrifice of readableness. But the more striking features—picturesque, historic, literary, legendary—have received ample attention. A great variety of volumes more or less closely related to the story of each river has been consulted, and many fragments of fact and fancy have been culled from such sources and woven into the text of the present series; but there is also included much which is the result of personal observation, and of contact with chance acquaintances, who furnish to every traveller a great deal of the pleasure and human interest of any particular journey.

The numerous pictures were all made especially for these books with the intent of supplying an attractive summary of each stream's individuality. All in all, the books, both in their literary and pictorial features, are of such a character that they should be of general interest and in a marked degree serviceable to whoever wishes to make a journey beside or on any of the rivers that find place in this series.

The Picturesque St. Lawrence

I

THE EARLIEST EXPLORERS

The St. Lawrence, measured from its most distant source, is over two thousand miles long, but ordinarily the name is only applied to the seven hundred miles between Lake Ontario and the Gulf. It drains an immense portion of North America, and the amount of water it carries to the ocean is exceeded by no other river on the globe except the Amazon. Nearly all its feeders are clear woodland trout or salmon streams, and its purity is no less remarkable than its volume. Its waters shake the earth at Niagara; and "The Great Lakes are its camping grounds, where its hosts repose under the sun and stars in areas like that of states and kingdoms."

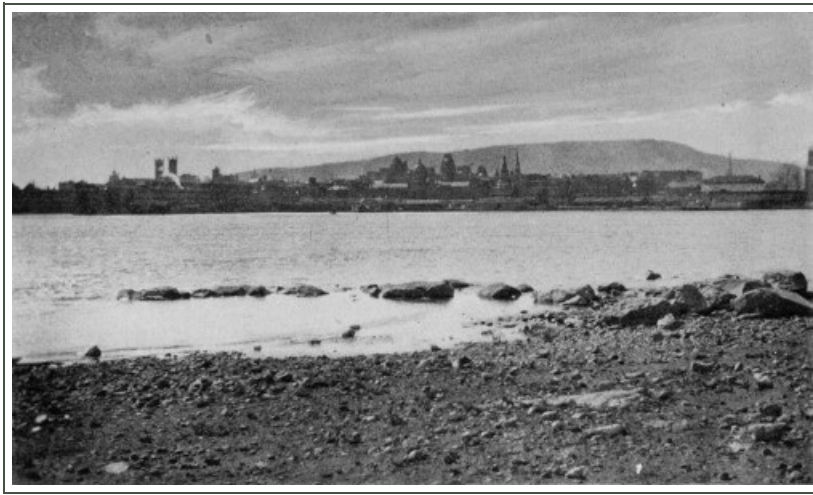
The breadth of its upper course is seldom less than a mile, and in several places there are expansions of such extent that they have received the name of lake. Below Quebec it has a width of from twenty to thirty miles. The influence of the tide is felt more than five hundred miles from the gulf, and the river is navigable for large sea-going vessels to Montreal, eighty miles farther inland. Rapids interrupt progress in the river itself beyond that point, but by the aid of canals continuous water communication is obtained to the head of Lake Superior. Indeed, taking the river, the canals and lakes together, this is the grandest system of inland navigation in the world.

Some of the river's tributaries are themselves of notable size. The largest are the Ottawa and the Saguenay, which flow into it from the north; but mention should also be made of those historic water thoroughfares—the Richelieu and St. Francis, which come from the south. As a rule, the tributary streams run a rough and tortuous course and abound in rapids and waterfalls that give them beauty and often furnish valuable power.

The streams were the main highways of the savages, and they built their villages on the banks, fished in the waters and hunted in the neighboring woodlands. The Indians had no horses or other beasts of burden, and this lack, as much as the difficulties of the wilderness, hindered their travel by land. Their journeying was therefore largely confined to the lakes and streams leaving no trail by which their movements could be traced, except where they carried their light birch-bark canoes around rapids or falls, or where a portage was necessary from one waterway to another.

The rivers and the lakes in like manner served the early comers from Europe when they wanted to penetrate inland, and on their banks were established the homes of such settlers as ventured away from the seacoast. Under these conditions it is only natural that the whole history of Canada should be closely interwoven with that of the St. Lawrence, and it was by way of this stream that the pioneers from France overran a great part of the interior of the continent before the settlers of the Atlantic Coast had crossed the Appalachians.

Within a few years after Columbus made his first voyage to the New World, the French fishing boats began to frequent the cod-banks of Newfoundland. This fishery soon became well established, and as early as 1517 no less than fifty Spanish, French and Portuguese vessels were engaged in it at the same time. But there was little inclination on the part of the voyagers to make permanent settlements on the rocky shores that bordered the fishing grounds or to attempt inland exploration, for the region was regarded with a good deal of superstitious fear. Griffins were supposed to infest the gloomy mountains of Labrador; and fiends, with wings, horns and tail, were said to have taken possession of an island north of Newfoundland. Voyagers passing this "Isle of Demons" heard the din of infernal orgies; and the mariners who had occasion to set foot on its shores would never venture alone into the haunted woods. It was even affirmed that the Indians had abandoned the island, so tormented were they by the imps of darkness.



*Montreal and Mount Royal as seen from Helen's
Isle [To List](#)*

Fishermen and explorers gradually made known the contour of Newfoundland and the adjoining mainland; but the first person to go up the St. Lawrence was Jacques Cartier. He was a man who came of a family of hardy sailors, and had gone to sea as a mere boy. Later he became a corsair roaming the high seas in search of weaker vessels to capture, generally, though not always, those of a nation with which his own chanced to be at war; and his ideas of right and wrong were never very clear. When he sailed from France in 1534 on his earliest voyage to the New World he was forty years old, with a well-established reputation for courage and energy. This venture was made in the hope of adding to his own and his country's prosperity by finding a short route to China and India. His two little vessels were smaller than most modern yachts, but they safely crossed the pathless waste of waters, and at the end of three weeks the voyagers sighted Newfoundland and put into a harbor to repair their ships. Then they sailed northward to the coast of Labrador which looked so dreary, even in the month of June, that they were persuaded it must be the land told of in the Bible, set apart for Cain; and the inhabitants were so unfriendly it seemed quite likely they were that outcast's descendants.

Cartier passed between Labrador and Newfoundland through the Straits of Belle Isle and cruised southward to the coast of New Brunswick where he entered Miramichi Bay. While there so many savages paddled out in their canoes to see the wonderful strangers in boats moving with wings that Cartier fired his cannon to scare them away. But the next day he went on shore and made friends with the chief of the Indians by giving him a red hat.

When the little vessels resumed their voyage they went up the coast to the peninsula that thrusts out into the gulf south of the great river. At Gaspé, Cartier landed and planted a cross and took captive two young Indians from far up the St. Lawrence who had come down to the sea to catch mackerel. Then he crossed to the Island of Anticosti, where he was actually at the entrance of the river, had he only known it. But stormy autumn was at hand, and he bore away for France carrying with him, as a sample of the natural products of the region he had explored, the two Indian captives.

The following year, in May, Cartier again sailed for the New World, this time with three vessels. His followers consisted of a mixed company of gentleman rovers who wanted to go, criminals from the jails who did not want to go, and the two kidnapped Indians. When the Atlantic had been crossed Cartier went through the Straits of Belle Isle just as he had on his previous voyage. Then he put into a small bay on the Labrador coast to which he gave the name of St. Lawrence, a name afterward applied to the entire gulf and to the great river beyond.

Later, as he was sailing westward along the bleak coast of the Gaspé Peninsula, where to the south could be seen the blue Gaspé range of mountains with its lofty sentinels, the Shickshaws, Cartier questioned his Indians as to the nature of the channel before them.

“It is a river without end,” they replied.

The breadth of the channel and the saltness of the water made Cartier doubt that it could really be a river, and he sailed on hoping he had found a passage to the Indies. It seemed a hazardous undertaking to go on thus with no better pilots than the two young Indians; but fortune favored, and on the first of September the voyagers reached the gorge of the Saguenay with its towering cliffs and marvellous depth of water. The savage, mountainous shores of this stream from the

north disinclined Cartier to explore in that direction, though his Indians told him wonderful stories of mines and gems that could be found beyond the rocky barriers. He continued up the St. Lawrence and anchored a few miles below what is now Quebec, between the northern shore and the richly wooded Isle of Orleans. Indians came swarming from the shores paddling their canoes about the ships and clambering to the decks to gaze in bewilderment at the voyagers and their belongings.

Cartier received them kindly, listened to a long speech by their great chief, Donnacona, whom he regaled with bread and wine; and after his guests departed set forth in a boat to explore the river above.

When he came to the west end of the Isle of Orleans the river again spread broad before him, and on ahead a mighty promontory thrust its rugged front out into the current from the north shore of the mainland. East of the crag a tributary joined the main stream. This was the river now called the St. Charles. Cartier ascended it a short distance, landed, crossed the meadows, clambered up the rocks through the forest and emerged on a clearing where there was a squalid hamlet of bark huts. Here dwelt the chief that Cartier had entertained on his vessel, and the village was called Stadacona. The name, which means “a crossing on floating wood,” originated in the fact that at high tide the mouth of the St. Charles was frequently so blocked with driftwood it could be crossed on foot. After satisfying their curiosity the visitors returned to their ships.



The mountainous northern shore of lower river [To List](#)

The Indians said that many days' journey up the river was a much larger village, named Hochelaga; but when Cartier told them he would go to see it they tried to dissuade him, probably because they did not wish to share with others the advantages of trading with the white men. Their arguments availed nothing, and they concluded to try another sort of appeal. One morning, the Frenchmen, looking up the river from their anchored ships, beheld three Indians attired to represent devils approaching in a canoe. The masqueraders were dressed in black and white dog skins, they had blackened their faces, and on their heads were antlers as long as a man's arm. They allowed their canoe to drift slowly past the ship while the chief fiend delivered a loud-voiced harangue.

Then they paddled to the shore where their fellow-tribesmen rushed pell-mell from the bordering woods, and with shrill clamors bore them into the sheltering thickets. In this leafy seclusion the French heard the Indians declaiming in solemn conclave for a full half hour. At length the two young Indians who had been Cartier's captives came out of the bushes and enacted a pantomime of amazement and terror. Cartier shouted from the vessel to ask what was the matter. They replied that the god Coudouagny had sent to warn the French against attempting to ascend the river, and that if the voyagers persisted in going thither they would be overwhelmed with snowstorms, gales and drifting ice.

The French replied that Coudouagny was a fool, and made ready for the expedition. Cartier set out for Hochelaga in his smallest ship and two open boats, accompanied by several of the gentlemen who had come with him from France, and fifty sailors. They glided on their way with the forests of gay autumnal verdure on either hand festooned with grape-vines, and the water alive with wild-fowl. The ship grounded, but they went on in the boats, and on the second of October neared Hochelaga. The Indians had seen them coming, and when they approached the shore, just below where now are Montreal's quays and storehouses on the southern side of the great island that the city occupies, they found a

throng of savages gathered to receive them. As soon as the boats touched the land the Indians crowded around, dancing and singing, and bestowing on the strangers gifts of fish and maize. The natives continued to express their delight even after it grew dark; for the night was lighted up far and near with fires around which the savages could be seen from the French camp, still engaged in their revels.

At dawn the French started to follow a path leading northward through the forest that covered the site of the future city. Presently they met an Indian chief with a numerous retinue, who greeted them courteously and invited them to pause and warm themselves by a fire kindled beside the path. When they had seated themselves the chief made them a speech, and was requited for his eloquence by two hatchets, two knives, and a crucifix. Then the march was resumed, and soon the strangers came to open fields covered with ripened maize, and on beyond rose a steep, wooded mountain with the Indian town at its base.

The town was encircled with palisades formed of trunks of trees set in a triple row. The middle row was upright, while the outer and inner ones inclined and crossed near the summit where they were lashed to a horizontal pole. On the inner side of the palisades were galleries for the defenders with rude ladders to mount to them and quantities of stones ready to throw down on the heads of assailants. When the voyagers entered the narrow portal they found about half a hundred large oblong dwellings, each serving for several families. These were fifty yards or so long, and twelve or fifteen wide, and had frames of slender poles covered with sheets of bark. Through the middle of each wigwam ran a passage with stone fireplaces at intervals and openings in the roof above to allow some of the smoke to escape. Kettles of baked clay were used for cooking purposes. Along the borders of the apartments were benches covered with furs to serve for beds; and on the walls hung sheaves of stone arrows, and occasional tomahawks, flint knives, red clay pipes and dried human scalps.

The dwellings were arranged about an open area a stone's throw in width, and here Cartier and his followers were surrounded by swarms of women and children. With their white skins, bearded faces and strange attire and weapons, they doubtless seemed demigods rather than men. Presently a troop of women brought mats, the bare earth was carpeted for the guests, and they sat down. Then the feminine and juvenile rabble was banished to a distance by the warriors, who squatted row on row around the whites. As soon as they had settled themselves the bed-ridden old chief of the nation, paralyzed, helpless and squalid, was borne on a deerskin by some of his subjects into the midst of the assembly and placed before Cartier. The aged savage pointed feebly to his powerless limbs and implored the healing touch from the hand of the French chief. Then from the surrounding dwellings came a woful procession of the sick, the lame, the blind, carried or led forth, and all gathered before the perplexed commander as if he were a powerful magician capable of restoring them to immediate health.

The best he could do was to pronounce over his petitioners some verses from the Bible, make the sign of the cross, and utter a prayer. Then came a distribution of presents. Knives and hatchets were given to the men, and beads to the women, while pewter rings and other trinkets were thrown among the children who engaged in a vigorous scramble to secure these treasures.

Now the French filed out of the town, and, accompanied by a troop of Indians, climbed to the top of the neighboring mountain, whence they could see in all directions the mantling forest, broken only by the cornfields just below, and by the broad river glistening amid the realm of verdure. Cartier called the height Mount Royal, and this same name in slightly different form is that of the busy city which now occupies the site of the old Indian town.

The French presently returned to their boats and rowed away down the river. When they arrived at Stadacona they found that their companions had built a fort of palisades on the bank of the St. Charles, and close by were moored the ships. Here they were all soon besieged by the rigors of the Canadian winter. The streams were frozen over, and the snow blanketed everything with white, and drifted above the sides of the ships. At first the Indians came daily wading through the snow to the fort, but by the end of December their visits had almost ceased. Scurvy broke out among the French, and man after man succumbed, till twenty-five had died, and only three or four were left in health. The ground was so hard they could not bury their dead, and they hid the bodies in the snowdrifts. Cartier nailed an image of the Virgin against a tree, and on a Sunday summoned forth his followers, who, haggard and woe-begone, moved in feeble procession to the spot. There they knelt in the snow before the holy symbol and sang litanies and psalms. That day another of the party died.

There was fear that the Indians, hearing of the weakness of the whites, might finish the work the scurvy had begun. So none were allowed to approach the fort; and when a party of savages lingered within hearing, the invalid garrison beat

with sticks and stones against the walls that the clatter might delude their dangerous neighbors into thinking the men in the fort were engaged in hard labor. One day, Cartier, walking near the river, met an Indian who had been suffering not long before with scurvy, as had many of the other Indians. He was now in high health and spirits. Cartier asked him by what means he had been cured, and the Indian replied it was by drinking a decoction made from the leaves of the arbor-vitæ. As soon as possible, after Cartier had returned and reported at the fort, a copious quantity of this healing draught was prepared. The men drank freely and health and hope began to revisit the hapless company.

The winter at last wore away, the ships were released from the grip of the ice, and the French made ready to sail for France. Cartier wanted to take back some of the natives to tell of the marvels of the region he had discovered, and as he knew they would not go of their own free will, he lured Donnacona and several of his chiefs to the fort where he had them seized and hurried on board the ships. Then the voyagers erected a cross on the bank of the stream, raised the flag of France near by and sailed away down the river. The tribesmen of Donnacona followed in their canoes as far as the Isle of Hazels begging for the release of the kidnapped chiefs, but without avail. Cartier kept on his course and reached France in midsummer.

In his account of this year in the New World he calls the St. Lawrence “the River of Hochelaga,” or “the great river of Canada.” Canada was an Indian word equivalent to town or village and was at first applied by the French to only a limited portion of the valley about Stadacona. But the extent of territory it covered was gradually enlarged until it now embraces all the British dominions in North America except Newfoundland and Labrador.

Five years passed, and we find Cartier for a third time on his way across the Atlantic. “We have resolved,” said the king, “to send him again to the lands of Canada and Hochelaga, which form the extremity of Asia toward the west.” The object of the expedition was discovery, settlement, and the conversion of the Indians.



Quebec Citadel and Lower Town in winter [To List](#)

In the course of time Cartier's fleet of five ships cast anchor beneath the cliffs of Quebec. Canoes came out from the shore filled with feathered savages inquiring for their kidnapped chiefs. But Cartier answered evasively. As a matter of fact the captives had all died within a year or two, though he only acknowledged the death of Donnacona and declared that the others had married white women and were so contented with their new life that they had refused to come back.

The French presently went a few miles farther up the river to Cap Rouge where they landed. Here they picked up quartz crystals on the shore and thought them diamonds, rambled through the tall grass of the meadow in an adjacent glen that opened back inland, climbed the steep promontory whence they looked down on the neighboring wooded slopes, and in a quarry of slate gathered scales of a yellow mineral that glistened like gold. Later they cleared off a patch of woods, sowed some turnip seed, cut a zigzag road up the height, and built two forts, one at the summit and one on the shore below.

A nobleman named Roberval was to follow Cartier from France and reinforce his expedition; and after considerable delay, he set sail with three ships and two hundred colonists. But hardly had he crossed the Atlantic when he met Cartier's fleet on its way home. What prompted so resolute a man as Cartier to thus abandon the New World is not

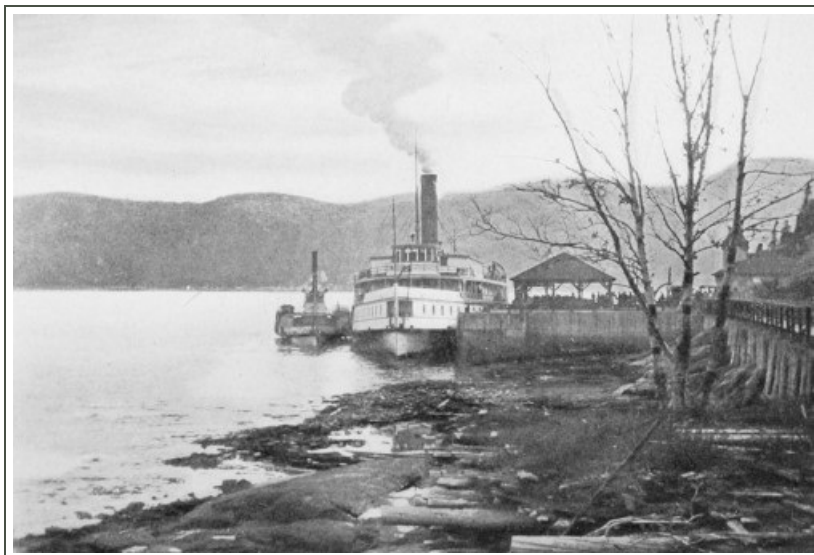
known. Roberval ordered him to return, but under cover of night Cartier slipped away and continued his voyage to France.

Roberval had a mixed company of nobles, soldiers, sailors and adventurers, and a number of women and children. Among the women was a very comely maiden named Marguerite, a niece of Roberval himself. The same ship in which she sailed carried a young gentleman who had embarked for love of her, and she loved him. This was not to Roberval's liking. He demanded that they should renounce each other, but the lovers defied him, and in his rage he anchored off the Isle of Demons, landed Marguerite with an old Norman nurse who had taken the lovers' part, gave them four arquebuses for their defence and left them to their fate. Roberval thought he had effectually separated the maiden and her betrothed but the young man threw himself into the sea, and by desperate effort gained the shore.

The ship sailed on its way, and, during the long months that followed, the three dwellers on the island contrived to subsist on beasts and birds shot with the arquebuses. In the course of a year a child was born to Marguerite, the first child born of European parentage in all the vast domain now known as British North America. Soon afterward the father of the babe died, and the two women laid him to rest as best they could. A few months later the child died also, and its little body was buried beside that of its father. The old nurse did not survive much longer, and then Marguerite was left alone. Sometimes the white bears prowled around her dwelling, and she shot three. Sometimes the demons assailed her, but she discharged her guns at them and they retired with shrieks and threats. Two years and five months after she landed on the island, she saw a small fishing-craft far out at sea and hastily made a fire to attract its attention. The crew presently observed the column of smoke curling upward from the haunted shore, and they warily drew near, until they descried a woman in wild attire waving signals to them. So they took Marguerite from the island, and she went with them back to France.

Her uncle had gone on up the St. Lawrence and started a settlement in the wilderness at Cap Rouge. On the height where Cartier had intrenched himself Roberval erected a castle-like structure with two spacious halls, a kitchen, chambers, storerooms, workshops, cellars, a well, an oven and two water-mills. Here all the colony dwelt under the same roof. At length two of the ships sailed for home, and winter came on. Then the colony found that though they had storehouses there were no stores; they had mills, but no grist; an ample oven, yet lacked bread. They bought fish of the Indians, and dug roots which they boiled in whale-oil. Disease broke out, and before spring a third of the settlers had died. Roberval ruled his followers with a rod of iron. The quarrels of the men and the scolding of the women were alike punished at the whipping-post, "by which means they lived in peace." An attempt to explore the upper river resulted in the loss of eight men, and the whole experience of the colony was so dismal that the remnants presently returned to their native land.

Of the final fate of Roberval there are conflicting accounts. The most interesting one is to the effect that he made another voyage to the New World and went up the Saguenay; and it is affirmed by the natives that he and his followers have never returned but are still wandering somewhere in the interior.



The Tadousac landing at the mouth of the Saguenay

[To List](#)

II

THE THOUSAND ISLANDS

On the Canadian side of the river, where the St. Lawrence leaves Lake Ontario and begins to thread its way among the intricacies of the Thousand Islands, stands the historic city of Kingston. Here was established a wilderness outpost in the days of the early French dominion. Count Frontenac, then Governor of New France, selected the site in 1673 and erected a strong wooden blockhouse to protect the fur trade between Montreal and the northwestern wilds. Accompanied by about four hundred men, including a considerable proportion of mission Indians, he came himself from Quebec to see the work done. The journey was made in a hundred and twenty canoes and two large flat-boats. These flat-boats were painted with strange devices in red and blue that the Iroquois who had been invited to a council might be dazzled by the unwonted display of splendor.

The council met where the city now is, and there was speech-making and much flattery and many fine promises. Frontenac gave presents of guns and tobacco to the braves, and raisins to the women and children; and in the evenings he feasted the squaws to make them dance.

Meanwhile Frontenac's followers had begun the fort. Some cut down trees, some dug the trenches, some hewed the palisades; and the Iroquois were greatly astonished at the orderliness and alacrity with which the work proceeded. When Fort Frontenac, as it was called, had been completed, a guard was left in the lonely outpost provisioned for a twelve-month, and the rest of the expedition departed down the river.

The next year, by act of the King of France, Fort Frontenac and its vicinity was turned over to La Salle, the future explorer of the Mississippi, on condition that he pay back ten thousand francs the fort had cost the king, maintain the stronghold at his own charge, form a French colony about it, build a church whenever the inhabitants should reach one hundred, and form a settlement of domesticated Indians in the neighborhood.

La Salle promptly accepted the responsibility, began his tasks, and was in a fair way to make his fortune, so favorable was the situation for the fur trade. He was master of all around him, the nearest settlement being a week's journey distant. Within two years he demolished the original fort and replaced it with another that had ramparts and bastions of stone on the land side, and palisades fronting the water. Nine small cannon were mounted on the walls. It contained barracks, a forge, a well, a mill and a bakery. About fifteen persons constituted the garrison, and there were in addition two or three score laborers and canoe-men, the latter reputed to be the best in America. Along the shore south of the fort was a small hamlet of French farms, and farther on, a village of Iroquois whom La Salle had persuaded to settle here. Considerable land had been cleared and planted, cattle, swine and fowls had been brought up from Montreal, and three small vessels had been built to ply on the lake in the interest of the fur trade.

But the autocrat of this little empire was not content. He would explore the great valley of the Mississippi and add it to the French domain in the New World. So late in the year 1678 he left all prospects of wealth and comfort and began the long journey that was to end only with his death in the wilds of Texas.

The years passed without any events of serious significance occurring at Fort Frontenac until 1687. There had been, however, a good deal of trouble with the Iroquois, and the French became suspicious of the inhabitants of two Indian villages on the north shore of Lake Ontario. These Indians had maintained a strict neutrality and were in the habit of hunting and fishing for the Frontenac garrison. But now the French invited them to the fort for a feast, and they came to the number of thirty men and about ninety women and children. All were seized, and a raiding party from the fort secured nearly as many more. The warriors were tied to a row of posts inside of the fort, and one witness declared that they were fastened by the neck, hands and feet in such a way that they could neither sleep nor drive off the mosquitoes. To make matters worse, some of the Christian Indians from down the river amused themselves by burning the fingers of the unfortunates in the bowls of their pipes. Most of them were eventually sent to France to share with convicts and heretics the horrible slavery of the royal galleys. As for the women and children, many died at the fort, and the rest were baptized and distributed among the mission villages.



Gateway to Fort Frontenac [To List](#)

The following year the Iroquois and their allies the English, threatened reprisal, and an urgent entreaty was dispatched to the French king begging him to send back the prisoners who had gone to the galleys. The letter was written by the governor, and it contained these words: "If ill-treatment has caused them all to die—for they are people who easily fall into dejection, and who die of it—and if none of them come back, I do not know whether we can persuade these barbarians not to attack us."

Thirteen of the captives were finally sent back from France gorgeously clad, and returned to their people. But before they arrived affairs in the valley of the St. Lawrence had become so critical that orders were sent to have the commandant of Fort Frontenac destroy and desert the stronghold. The garrison presently reached Montreal where they reported that they had set fire to everything in the fort that would burn, sunk three vessels belonging to it in the lake, mined the walls, and left matches burning in the powder magazine. After they had started on their journey they heard the explosion. But it was learned later that the destruction was far from complete, and a large quantity of stores and munitions fell into the hands of the Iroquois.

The fort remained a ruin for seven years, and then it was repaired and once more garrisoned. It did not suffer again in the hazards of war until 1758 when it capitulated to an English expedition from Oswego. The victors carried off as much plunder as they could, and burned the rest or gave it to their Indian allies. Besides battering the fort to pieces they destroyed the surrounding buildings and the shipping and left only desolation behind.

Such is the early story of Kingston, the most important town on the St. Lawrence above Montreal. The city of today is a place of some fifteen thousand inhabitants. Its military college, its massive forts and its martello towers make it "the West Point of Canada." In the town itself is Fort Frontenac near the waterside, and on a height of a neighboring island that is connected with the city by a quaint wooden toll-bridge, is Fort Henry. Both forts are of gray, weather-stained stone which gives them an appearance of great age. One of the martello towers is right in the harbor. The typical tower of this type is a circular structure of masonry erected to repel the approach of an enemy by water, and has on the summit a gun mounted on a revolving platform so it can be fired in any direction. The Kingston towers were originally capable of doing very effective work in repelling marauding Yankees, and they still look grim and menacing and ready to deal out dire destruction, but in modern warfare they probably have little value.

As seen from the harbor Kingston presents a particularly attractive appearance with its spires and domes rising from amid the green foliage, and the steamships and slender-masted sailing vessels and numerous minor craft along its waterfront. The place is very compact, and it is astonishing on a pleasant evening to see how full the chief street is of people. Most of the stores are closed, but the younger portion of the inhabitants seems to be out, nevertheless. The saloons and tobacco shops are busy, and the moving picture "theatatoriums" are generously patronized; yet in the main the populace is just strolling. I imagined that many of them might resort to the public library, but this institution is merely a large dismal room over a store where I found only a scant dozen readers. The books were caged off in an alcove, and the battered old reading tables and tattered magazines were far from being cheerfully attractive. An American town of the same size would have a fine building and an extensive collection of books.

Perhaps the feature of Kingston that I enjoyed most was a park deeply shadowed with trees, and open on one side to Lake Ontario. It was delightful to linger there by the shore on a sunny afternoon, cooled by the breeze, watching the limpid waves beat on the low rocky beach. The water was wonderfully clear, and it enters the St. Lawrence as pure as a mountain spring.

To the south were the first of the Thousand Islands. These islands, which, as a matter of fact, number 1692, extend from Lake Ontario to Prescott, fifty miles below. Some authorities say they begin with a group west of Kingston known as the Three Brothers, and end at Brockville with the Three Sisters. But there are other islands which dispute the claims of these. Some people disregard the Three Brothers entirely because they are several miles out in the lake, and declare that the rightful leader of the procession is Whiskey Island, overlooked by the grim stronghold of Fort Henry.

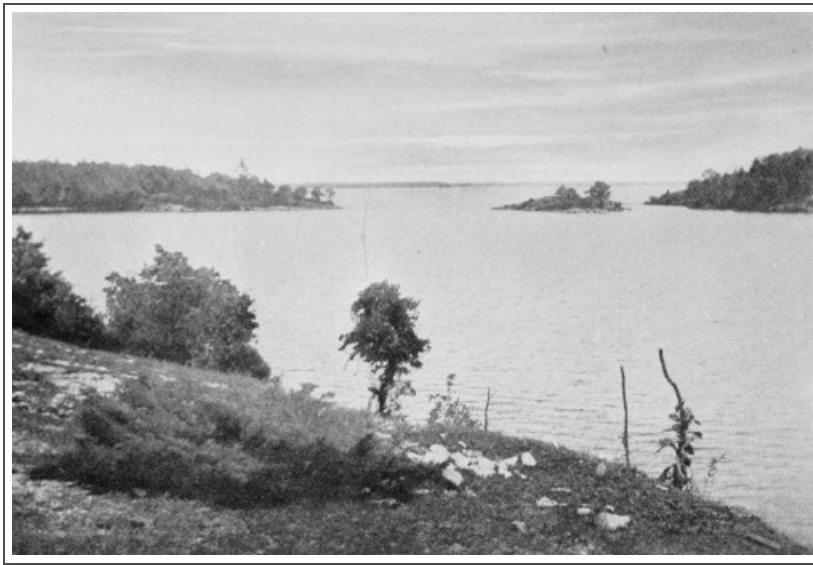
You could heave a stone from one end of Whiskey Island to the other; yet there are some isles in the archipelago so much smaller than this as to be mere dimples on the surface of the broad river and supporting not the least verdure on their barren rocks. Other islands are large, fertile areas crowned with lofty trees and containing hundreds of acres of well-cultivated farms. Occasionally a single farmer owns an entire island of a suitable size to support him and keep him busy. One such owner with whom I talked thought this quite an ideal arrangement. He had no line fences to maintain, and if he exterminated the weeds he knew they would not come in again by someone else's neglect. Boats furnish easy means of travel from the islands to the mainland in the warm months, and in winter the channels are thickly sheeted with ice, on which the islanders journey freely back and forth.

The steamers that make the down-river trips through the islands leave Kingston at a very early hour, and on the autumn day that I went over the route the morn was still dusky and starlit when I went on board. But soon after we started the sun came up in the red eastern haze, and sent its warm level beams over the broad expanse of the river. We continued among the islands for four or five hours, yet much of the time so large were they that it seemed as if we were sailing down a stream with mainland on either side. At other times we were amid clusters of the lesser islands, many of which are owned by wealthy people who have built fine residences on them and laid out tasteful grounds. These summer homes represent all kinds of domiciles from the modest cottage of the camper to the imposing castle of the millionaire. Occasionally a little bridge connected islets, and the waterside was buttressed with a stout stone wall that followed in a sinuous line the natural contour of the shore. The turf and the trees too, were groomed into a park-like aspect, and it was all very pretty and pleasant. But I preferred those islands that were still in a wild state of nature, with bristling firs and pines crowning their rugged rocks. As a whole they are mild and low-lying and make no very striking appeal to the sense of sight, though admirers declare them to be the most picturesque archipelago in the world. Their chief attraction consists in the constant changes of scene, daintiness of form, and the turning and intersecting of the transparent waterways gliding placidly between. That they should be healthful and have charm for a summer resort with that cool flow of crystalline water always about them is no wonder.

The river in this vicinity is remarkably equable, never in flood and never much affected by droughts. Seven feet is its greatest variation between a time of unusual rainfall, and a season that is extremely dry. But the level of the stream is also influenced by strong prevailing winds blowing up or down the lake; and as a result there have been instances of rapid fall, followed by a returning wave of extraordinary height.

What the Indians thought of the islands can be judged from the fact that they called them "The Garden of the Great Spirit." The primeval forest of the region abounded with deer and other game, the waters teemed with fish, and its little bays and islets were the haunts of numerous waterfowl—could anything be more delectable to the red hunter than such a land of plenty?

Another poetic fancy with regard to the islands refers us back to the time when Adam and Eve were driven from the Garden of Eden. We are told that Eden itself was borne away by the white-winged angels to the eternal spheres on high; but in passing through space there fluttered down to earth some flowers from the divine garden. Most of them fell into the broad outlet of Lake Ontario and there became the Thousand Islands—the paradise of the St. Lawrence.



The first of the Thousand Islands near Kingston [To List](#)

For unnumbered years this immediate neighborhood was the border-range of two of the most powerful Indian clans that inhabited the ancient American wilderness. North and east roamed the haughty Algonquins, noted as the greatest hunters of the land, while in the valleys to the south dwelt the Iroquois, who lived by fishing and cultivating the soil and who boasted of great fields of maize and extensive apple orchards. For many a changing season these people of the wilds dwelt side by side in harmony. It was one of the friendly customs of the young men of the two tribes to meet at certain times to hunt and fish together, with the understanding that whichever party killed the lesser amount of game animals, or speared the fewer fish, should dress all the spoils of the chase that were brought in. Usually the Iroquois were the unfortunate ones, and it at length became regarded as a certainty that they would do the “squaw” work and that their rivals would enjoy running the game to earth with no aftermath of disagreeable labor. This disinclined the Iroquois to the sport and it was gradually being abandoned when, on one of the now rare occasions that the rivals engaged in a hunt, the Algonquins were astonishingly unsuccessful. For three days they followed their quest in vain, but the Iroquois came from their forest roving with game in abundance. The Algonquins went sullenly about the unwelcome task of dressing the game, and so sorely did they feel their disgrace that they vowed among themselves to have revenge. Night came and while the weary Iroquois hunters slept, a sudden assault was made and every one of them slain.

The assassins denied their deed, and not till long after did the friends of the dead learn the facts. Then they asked that justice should be done the slayers. The Algonquins were called to a council but they evaded the matter of a settlement, and tried to satisfy the complainants with honeyed words. This, however, availed nothing. The Iroquois, fiercely indignant, swore they would not rest, they nor their children to the last generation, until the Algonquins had been swept from the earth. Thus began the terrible feud which existed between the two savage races at the coming of the white men, and which continued to rage, drawing into its toils the French and the English and resulting in long dark years of border warfare.

A favorite rendezvous of the Indians was Carleton Island, one of the first good-sized islands on the American side of the river. Here many a council of war was held and many a bloody raid was devised. This same island, during the War of the Revolution, was a famous place of refuge for the tories of the Middle Colonies.

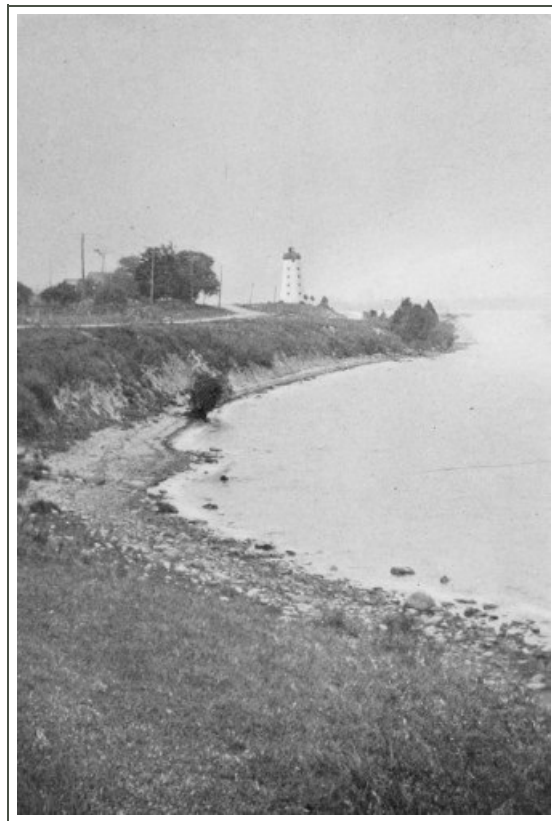
Perhaps the most interesting story of the Thousand Islands is that of the Lost Channel. It dates back to the time of the French and Indian War. An English naval and military expedition had started from Oswego against Montreal. The naval portion consisted of two armed vessels, the *Mohawk* and the *Onondaga*, and a number of boats. Soon after this flotilla had entered the St. Lawrence the lookout on the *Onondaga* discovered a party of French soldiers in a bateau putting out from Carleton Island. The vessel promptly started in pursuit, at the same time signalling the *Mohawk* to follow. A lively race of several miles ensued, and then the French boat disappeared down a narrow waterway between a large island and a group of smaller islands.

The *Onondaga* continued to follow until a startling discharge of musketry from the wooded banks of the islands roundabout showed that it had sailed into a trap. The decks of the warship were swept by the leaden hail of the

concealed foe, yet the English returned this fire so fast and furiously that the enemy was glad to retire. It was now necessary to find the way back to the main channel and to send word to the sister ship, which had not been seen for some time, to return also. For this latter duty a boat was dispatched under the command of Coxswain Terry, who delivered the order successfully. Then he and his crew left the *Mohawk* and started to row to their own vessel.

The *Onondaga* got back to the main channel and was at length rejoined by the *Mohawk*, but the coxswain's boat failed to appear. After an anxious period of waiting several parties were sent out to find the missing men. Their search, however, was unavailing, and when hope had to be abandoned the expedition went on its way. Nothing was ever learned of the fate of Terry and his crew. Probably they became bewildered among the maze of waterways and at last fell into the hands of the enemy. All we actually know is that the passage his boat entered after leaving the *Mohawk* has since been known as "The Lost Channel."

Another narrative that adds much to the charm of the Thousand Islands is concerned with the early years of the second quarter of the nineteenth century. The belief was at that time widely accepted both in Canada and the United States that the former country was being inflicted with the same abuses by the English government that had caused the thirteen American colonies to fight for their independence. A body of Canadian rebels established headquarters on Navy Island in the Niagara River, a short distance above the falls, and from there pretended to rule Canada. A little sidewheel steamer, the *Caroline*, went back and forth between the island and Buffalo carrying provisions to the rebels. But one dark winter night a company of the "Men of Gore" as the government troops guarding the Canadian shore called themselves, rowed across the swift and dangerous current, seized the *Caroline* as she lay at her wharf, put the crew ashore, set the steamer on fire and sent her all ablaze over Niagara Falls. As a consequence, the Navy Island rebels were starved out.



The historic lighthouse at Prescott

[To List](#)

This act roused the ire of an American who was familiarly called "Bill" Johnson, and who now became a sort of political Robin Hood intent to confer on Canada the boon of freedom. He got together a band of outlaws, or patriots, if one accepts their view, and on the night of May 30, 1838, he and his followers, disguised as Indians and armed with muskets, boarded the Canadian steamer, *Sir Robert Peel*, while en route from Brockville to Toronto carrying twenty passengers and a large amount of money to pay off the troops in the Upper Province. With shouts of "Remember the *Caroline*!" the "patriot" band forced the passengers and crew to take to the boats. Then the steamer was set on fire and left to her fate. The hull is still to be seen where it sank about a mile down the river from Thousand Island Park.

Johnson, elated with his success, made a personal declaration of war; but fortune favored him with no further conquests, and this “Pirate of the Thousand Islands” soon became a fugitive from justice. His daring and devoted daughter Kate rowed him from hiding-place to hiding-place, and kept him supplied with food. Kate at length succeeded in securing his pardon, and he became a lighthouse keeper. She herself married happily and was much loved and respected for her devotion to her father in the gloomy days of his outlawry. A secluded isle known as “The Devil's Oven” on which he was concealed for over a year belongs to one of her descendants.

In a literary way the Thousand Islands are closely linked with what is considered by many to be Cooper's finest story —“The Pathfinder.” The culminating scenes of the book are located on “Station Island.” No island of that name is to be found on the maps, and the author probably did not have any particular island in mind, but there seems reasonable warrant for concluding it must have been one of those on the Canadian side above Ganonoque.

As we move on down the river we at length reach Brockville. Near the east end of the town a bluff rises from the water's edge to a height of about fifty feet. This ledge with its overhanging shelves and clinging vines and many little caves is commonly spoken of as “High Rocks.” At a point where the face of the cliff is comparatively smooth tracings of a painting could be seen until within a few years. Formerly the spot was visited every spring by a band of Indians, who with weird ceremonies and incantations brightened the picture with fresh paint and departed. The picture was a rough representation of two white men apparently falling out of a canoe propelled by several Indians. This commemorated the following episode:

Two captured English officers were being conveyed by the Indians down the river to Montreal. As they approached Brockville a terrific storm arose and the boat being heavily loaded the Indians threw the prisoners overboard to lighten the canoe and at the same time appease the storm-god by a human sacrifice. But the storm-god refused to be placated. The gale increased in violence, and the Indians, feeling that they were doomed, mingled the wail of their death song with the howling of the hurricane. When opposite High Rocks the canoe went down with all its human freight, which included a distinguished chief. For more than a hundred years afterward members of the tribe visited the rock to renew the picture, and to attempt by their incantations to win back the favor of the Great Spirit, who was angry because the two officers had been drowned instead of being saved to burn at the stake.

As a whole, Brockville's experience has been peaceful, but one winter day, in the War of 1812, the Americans crossed the St. Lawrence on the ice and raided the town, robbing houses and carrying off as prisoners many of the villagers. In retaliation the Canadians attacked the fortified American town of Ogdensburg a little farther down the river. They surprised the garrison, took seventy-five prisoners and burned the barracks and four war vessels.

But now our steamer passes the row of little low-lying islets known as the Three Sisters that breast the current just below Brockville, and the Thousand Islands lie behind us, while the rapids are not far ahead.



The Long Sault Rapids [To List](#)

III

THE RAPIDS

The lake steamers continue down the river as far as Prescott. They cannot go farther because they are too large to run the rapids, which, beyond this point, occur at intervals all the way to Montreal. A transfer is therefore made to the river steamers. But Prescott itself is not without attractions that invite the traveller to loiter. On a slight elevation, a little back from the river is a stout, stone-walled blockhouse. This is surrounded by a high earthwork which hides all but the roof, and as the base of the earthwork is skirted with palisades the visitor who wishes to make a closer inspection of the fortification must seek the entrance.

I stopped to chat with a woman who lived near by. The day was warm, and she was sitting on her piazza enjoying the comfort of a breeze and occasionally chatting with chance acquaintances who paused in passing along the broad walk in front. When I asked about the blockhouse she said:

“Do you see that old lady going up the road with her cow? She could tell you all about it. Her husband soldiered it in England as a young man, and after he came here he had charge of the blockhouse for forty years. One night he died. He'd gone to bed feeling fine, and there he was in the morning dead with his eyes and mouth tight shut, layin' on his left side, perfectly peaceful. It's a nice job being keeper of that fort. The pay is liberal, the family lives in the blockhouse without its costing 'em anything for rent, and there's free pasturage for their cows. Oh, they've got a good chance and don't have to do a tap of work.

“Did you notice that man who just went by? He's an Indian. There's a couple of Indian families have moved here lately. They live in old shabby houses, but my lands! they're stylish as any white people. I was tellin' Jim, my husband, about the way they dress; and he says they're very civil and well-educated. One of the squaws went to school in an Ottawa convent.”

In the dreamy distance across the river I could see the wide-spreading city of Ogdensburg. My companion seemed a little envious of this flourishing American city, and she complained that Prescott was not a bit larger than it was twenty-five years ago, and that enterprises started in the town to help its growth had usually proved failures. Yet, why was expansion with all its chaos so desirable? I thought Prescott was very snug and delightful, and that it would be difficult to improve on its quiet homes and tree-shadowed streets. A radical business growth would upset this serenity and destroy much of the beauty, and the place would be gentle and homelike no longer.

There had been a fair in the town on the day of my visit, and in the evening, wherever people met, they were discussing its various features. An accident on the race course, though not very serious, had jarred the nerves of some so that their enjoyment of the occasion was a good deal dampened. One man who had been to so many fairs as to make his opinion that of an expert, said he thought the best thing in this year's fair was some trained fleas that could do tricks and draw little carts around on a sheet of paper. Another critic of the fair was a small girl who told how she had spent all her money on “the wild man” and the merry-go-round. It cost ten cents to go into the tent to see the former—“and he wasn't wild at all,” she affirmed sorrowfully. “They had him chained, but he was only just a nigger.”

On the merry-go-round she had spent thirty-five cents making trip after trip till she reached the bottom of her purse.

“Why, you crazy thing!” commented an older companion, “I should have thought once would have been enough.”

A mile down the river from the village is a lighthouse that is an historic landmark of exceptional interest. It stands on an outjutting point and is a very sturdy and thick-walled structure which originally did duty as a windmill. In that earlier period of its existence it figured conspicuously in the closing scenes of what was sometimes called “the Patriot War.” The Prescott episode was the result of a foolish project among some fanatics of northern New York to overthrow the Canadian government; but the war itself was inspired by the unrest of the people of the Dominion because their affairs were to a very large degree in the arbitrary control of the British ministry in London. Their own views as to the needs of the country, and their protests against the tyrannical and inconsiderate acts of the public officials counted for little, and at length some of the more radical of the “Reformers,” as they styled themselves, made ready to fight.

In 1837 hostilities began with a skirmish near Toronto in which the militia routed the rebels. Other minor actions followed, and the next year a brave and skilful Polish soldier, Colonel Van Schultz, and six hundred men made ready in Ogdensburg for a Canadian invasion. The men were partly Dominion "patriots," but the majority of them were American adventurers. Only one hundred and seventy reached the north shore of the river. There they were caught in a trap; for the United States authorities seized their boats and they could not return, nor could the rest of the six hundred come to their aid. Soon they were hotly attacked and took refuge in the big stone windmill on the bluff by the riverside, a little beyond the eastern borders of Prescott village.

There they held out for three days, and in the fighting thirty-six of the attacking force were killed, and nineteen of the besieged. At last cannon arrived from Kingston, and it was evident that the windmill's walls would be battered down unless the invaders surrendered. So they gave up, and Van Schultz and eleven others were brought to trial and hanged. It is of interest to recall that in his will Van Schultz left ten thousand dollars for the benefit of the families of those of his followers who sacrificed their lives in the expedition.

Soon after the river steamer leaves Prescott it passes through the Gallops and the Rapids du Plat. These, though not turbulent enough to afford any excitement, give a foretaste of what is to follow, and are a welcome change from the smooth surface and steady current of the upper river. But the Long Sault (*sault* or *saut*, pronounced *soo*, is equivalent to rapids) which comes next contains the heaviest swells on the river. The rapids here extend for a distance of nine miles with a total fall of about fifty feet. They are roughest at the part known as "the Cellar." There, and wherever else the treacherous reefs block the way, are found madly dashing waves and whirlpools and a smother of flying spray.

When the descent in the steamer begins you can see on ahead the seething tumult of waters rushing in fierce violence down the declivity, apparently without termination. The vessel shoots forward, settles downward to a lower level, rushes ahead again, and the sinking is repeated; and thus the boat goes on through the buffeting surges and darkling eddies past jutting headlands and threatening boulders. Even with her steam almost shut off she has a speed of twenty miles an hour, carried along by the sheer force of the current, and navigation of the Long Sault requires unusual nerve and precision in piloting. To lessen the possibility of a mishap the rudder is provided with an emergency tiller, and this is ready for instant use while shooting the rapids.

The first large boat to attempt the passage of the Long Sault was the *Ontario* built about the year 1840 at the upper end of the lake of the same name. Her speediness attracted the attention of some Montreal men who bought her for a mail boat to ply between that city and Quebec. Then they grappled with the problem of getting her down to Montreal. No craft of anywhere near that size had ever attempted to run the Long Sault; but they secured for the hazardous undertaking, two Indians known as "Old Jock" and "Old Pete," the best pilots on the river. The owners promised them one thousand dollars each if they accomplished the enterprise successfully.

To test the depth of the water a crib was made forty feet square with cross pieces ten feet apart, and having stakes ten feet long projecting at frequent intervals from the bottom. Several Indians towed the crib out into the stream at the head of the rapids and let it go. Meanwhile a number of other Indians had been stationed in trees along the riverside to watch the crib's progress, and still others were stationed at the foot of the rapids where they caught the crib when it reached the quiet water. The crib was turned over and it was found that none of the stakes were broken. So it was plain there was water enough to run the *Ontario* through.

The Indians who had been in the trees on the bank then went on board the vessel and the voyage began. Each piloted it in turn as far as he had observed the crib's course. The only white man on board was the engineer, and he, like Old Jock and Old Pete was generously rewarded. Thus was made, in 1843, the first steamer trip down the rapids, and a descendant of one of those pioneer pilots now guides with trusty hand a modern boat that goes over the same course as the *Ontario* went then. But no other steamer attempted the shooting of the rapids for fifteen years.



Church and priest's house at St. Regis [To List](#)

I stopped in the vicinity of the Long Sault at a country village where I was told a variety of picturesque anecdotes concerning the river.

“The other day,” said the landlord of my hotel, “the rudder chain of the steamer broke while she was right in the midst of the rapids, and the boat went careering down the stream in a way that made the passengers' hair stand on end. You know she goes through those rapids like a bullet shot out of a gun, and what with her wild motions and her speed the five hundred tourists on board were just about scared to death. They were all in a panic running around and not knowing whether to jump over, or take the chances of getting smashed up on the vessel. But they got through finally without being wrecked, and anchored to patch up things before they went farther.

“That didn't hold a candle to the way two fellows from this village ran the rapids some years ago. James Bullock, the hotel-keeper here got up a picnic, and he thought it would be a big advertisement for the picnic and draw a crowd if he announced that a sixteen foot skiff with a couple of men in it would go down the rapids. He would be one of the men, and for the other he got John McPhee—‘Indian John’ people called him, though he wasn't an Indian at all, only rather dark skinned. The crowd come all right, and gathered on a hill where they could see the whole thing. First an old apple tree was sent down with a straw man tied astraddle of it. That was to give an idea of where to go with the boat.

“Bullock and McPhee expected to get a ducking, and they took off their coats and vests and boots and everything except their trousers and shirts. One man rowed and the other sat in the stern to steer. They might have gone through all right; but Lord! they went out too far. Besides, I guess they'd drank a glass or two more'n was good for 'em. They got a blame good scare right at the start. At the very head of the rapids is a big white swell that is never twice alike. That old breaker works cur'us, and when the boat struck it she was tossed up as high as a house, bottom upward. On shore there was the greatest excitement you ever saw, but we couldn't do anything. The boat went on like a race horse. Sometimes the men were on it and sometimes off, and there were times when they were swimming twenty feet away.

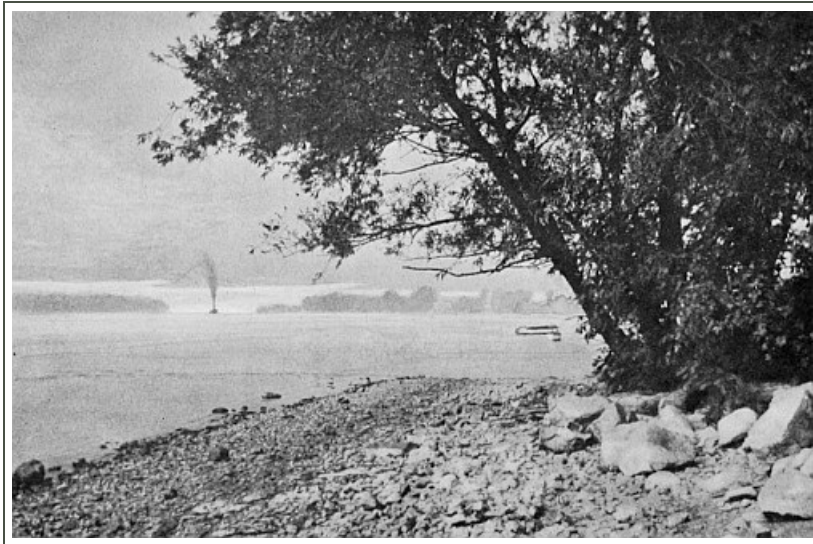
“By and by they got to the whirlpool and the boat canted up on end and went right down out of sight. That was where they lost their grip. But there happened to be a boat with a couple of men in it near the shore at that place and they grabbed Bullock and McPhee by the hair of their heads as they were drifting around the circuit of the whirlpool and pulled 'em out. They were helpless and pretty near drowned, but by rolling 'em on a barrel they got the water out of 'em so that they finally revived.”

The hotel and village were strikingly quiet, and I wondered at the absence of loafers and drinkers. The landlord explained in much disgust that the place had voted no license. “That isn't the fault of the village,” said he, “but of the farmers out in the country—Methodists and such. It has made this a dead town.” That is, the saloons which were formerly centers of noisy drunken sociability are now dull places.

“The region is prosperous,” said my landlord, “but the farmers are often pretty hard up for help. They used to depend largely on their own boys to do the work. Of late years, however, the boys all have to be educated and they leave the farm as soon as they can. The only boy who stays at home to help the old man is the numskull who can't learn anything.”

In the evening we had a little thunderstorm—a very slight affair compared with some that visit the vicinity. It reminded the landlord of an experience a few years previous. “I’d gone down to the river, about two miles away one evening to fish,” said he, “and was caught in a series of thunderstorms which were so fierce they fairly made the earth shake. I stayed in a fisherman’s shack on the bank, and when I looked out all I could see was just balls of fire flying through the air. The storms kept coming up one right after the other all night long.

“I’d gone to fish for sturgeon. They run up the rapids about the middle of June when the raspberries are in blossom. It took two men to do the fishing. One would stand on the bank with a fat pine torch, and the other, armed with a long pole that had a gaff on the end, would watch till he saw a fish and then make a strike at it. I’ve caught lots of sturgeon that would weigh over a hundred pounds apiece. They sometimes grew to be eight or ten feet long and were so strong they’d pull a man in.”



On the shores of Lake St. Louis [To List](#)

There are still sturgeon in the river, but the construction of a canal around the rapids has so changed the conditions along shore that the fishing has been abandoned. By way of this canal all the ordinary water traffic passes up and down the valley; for the steamer that goes down the Long Sault makes the trip merely for the purpose of giving a thrill to tourists.

At the lower end of the canal is the busy manufacturing town of Cornwall; but the attractions of the town itself appealed less to me than the fact that in its vicinity was the Indian village of St. Regis. The Indian community, however, is five miles down the river on the other side. When I inquired how to get there someone recommended a certain old man who owned a motor boat. I hunted him up and we went together to his little shack of a boathouse. A small girl came and stood on the bank watching our preparations to embark, and my ancient mariner chatted with her affectionately. He called her “Beauty,” and in an aside to me said she was a favorite of his because her looks reminded him so much of his first wife.

Presently the engine had been oiled and started and we pushed out of the boathouse into the stream and sped away down the river aided by the current and a brisk wind. The engine did not run very smoothly. Every little while it gave an explosive snort and slowed down as if it intended to quit work. But we kept on without a stop, dashing through the crested waves and rounding point after point until the old man called to me and pointing with his finger said: “St. Regis.”

I looked and saw in the distance, close by the shore, a stone church and some clustering homes. We soon made a landing, and I went up the bank and rambled about the village. The church and the stone-walled, low-roofed priest’s house were within a few rods of the water. Behind were the village dwellings strung along rough, narrow lanes; and there were little fields of potatoes, corn and pumpkins, and thistle-grown opens and pastures. The houses were nearly all small, and their aspect was dismally barren and often shabby. At several places a tall wooden cross was erected by the wayside. These crosses were praying places in the processional religious fêtes.

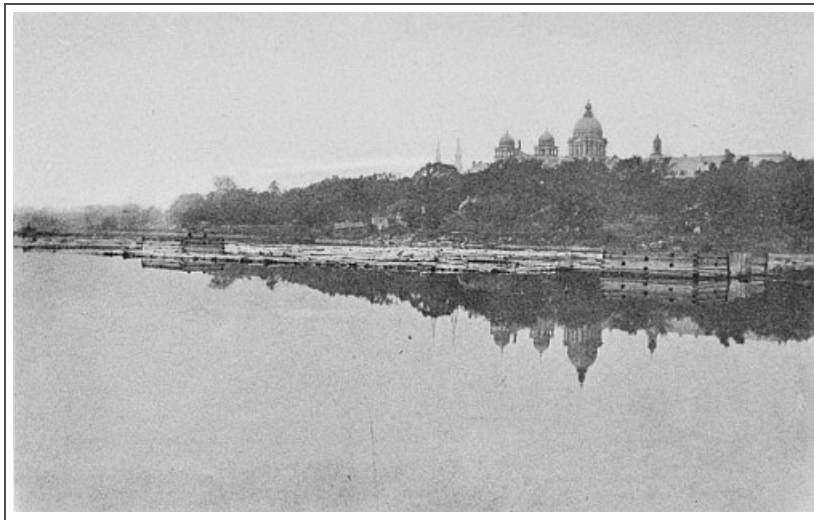
The church building was evidently not to be attributed to the taste and enterprise of the Indians themselves. It was

large, substantial and well-proportioned. Indian individuality seemed, however, to find expression in the unkempt burial place at one side of the edifice. Amid the ragged growths of weeds and grass was an occasional gravestone, and two or three graves were surrounded by rickety picket-fences, but the only really conspicuous object was a weathercock that had formerly been on the church spire and that had been replaced there by a gilt cross. It was a grotesque sort of bird on an ornamental standard perhaps ten feet high, and it looked very strange guarding the burial-place.

The day had been clear and sunny, but now big threatening clouds were reaching up across the sky, and when I returned to the boat the prospect was so stormy that my skipper hesitated to start. Soon, however, the sky brightened, and we got under way right in the teeth of the wind so that the spray from the white caps, as we bumped the waves, came flying over me where I sat in the bow. The sun shone at intervals through the broken clouds and illumined the river and the vast low landscape in a many-colored pageant. Where the river was in sunlight it was a delicate opaline tint, but under the cloud shadows it took on many a dusky tone of darker green or blue. The fields and woods on the banks alternated in the changing light and shadow from brilliant emerald to sober olive, while the distance was purple or azure.

I was having a glorious voyage, and thinking how all this scenic impressiveness must have appealed to the old French explorers when suddenly our engine stopped. "It won't pump," said my skipper, "and it has got so hot I don't dare let it work any longer."

Sure enough, the machinery was smoking, and there was a smell of burnt oil in the air. We were in mid-river, far from our destination, with desolate shores on either side, and wind and current against us. The boat swung around helpless amid the buffeting waves, and we had nothing with which to relieve the situation except one slender oar and a broken paddle. I labored with the former and the skipper with the latter; but the craft was too heavy and the elements too boisterous for us to make much of a success of this sort of navigation. We could not prevent the boat from swinging out of its course, and in order to correct its erraticalness I had to shift my oar to the opposite side every few minutes. So we were carried down stream in spite of all we could do.



Lachine [To List](#)

At length the skipper started his engine and got us around a point to where the current was less swift. Then he again had to shut off power and we resumed our labor with the oar and the broken paddle. My companion was by nature optimistic, and though he sometimes swore and sometimes groaned, he every little while had an idea for fixing his engine. His hands were too shaky for him to work with much expertness, and again and again he abandoned the task and took up the paddle. Two or three motor boats passed, but were far off across the great river. The old man put his hands up at the sides of his mouth and tried to hail them, and he swung his hat. But the people in the motor boats neither saw nor heard and soon disappeared from view. Our own best speed would hardly have rivalled that of a snail.

Finally an Indian came along in a skiff. I beckoned to him, and he turned aside from his course, and when he drew near rested on his oars and regarded us curiously. My skipper explained our trouble, and it was agreed that the Indian should take me across the river and leave word at a certain boathouse to send help to the castaway mariner. We got the old man's craft to the shore and there left him. Then away we went over the white-capped river. My oarsman was a

sinewy fellow who kept steadily and vigorously to his task, and after a long pull reached the opposite bank, and I plodded back to town.

I had supper at a small hotel near the railroad station. My companions at the table were of the working class, and while they ate they were engaged in a continuous joking discussion of their escapades when drunk. That they should get drunk was taken as a matter of course. Apparently it was their view that no manly man would always keep sober, and even if he had spells of being unquestionably vicious or beastly, that was usually thought humorous by his mates. To smoke and spit in public places, to swear and swagger and guzzle seems to be the ambition of a very large proportion of the Canadian youths. Their elders set the pace. I remember seeing a white-haired, spectacled man in a street car who proclaimed his nationality by singing "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled" as he marched up and down the aisle; and each time he made a step he wound the leg he lifted around the other in a most ecstatic manner. Drinking is the habit of the country and is not confined to any particular class.

In continuing down the river from the Long Sault, there is a considerable interval of smooth water before the Coteau Rapids are reached. The steamer makes the descent of these by a tortuous channel that winds in and out among numerous islands. At times the vessel almost brushes the trees on shore as it sweeps swiftly along.

Seven miles farther on are Cedar Rapids, which are commonly held to be the most beautiful of the entire series, and immediately afterward occur the Split Rock Rapids. The latter are sentineled at the entrance by submerged and ominous boulders, and they are particularly difficult to navigate. Next comes the white-crested turbulence of the Cascade Rapids, and then for a dozen miles the river is a broad expanse known as Lake St. Louis.

Charles Dickens made this river trip in 1842, but travelled by stagecoach around the more violent rapids. He mentions being much impressed by the rafts which then were frequently seen floating down the river. One of these that he describes as "gigantic" had "some thirty or forty wooden houses on it, and at least as many flag masts so that it looked like a nautical street." In those days all the lumber from the regions above was floated down the St. Lawrence in this manner. After the raft reached its destination it was broken up, the materials were sold and the boatmen returned for more.

When Lake St. Louis is passed, and the river contracts to its normal width its main mass flows south of the great Island of Montreal. At the left, on the island, is the town of Lachine. This place was begun by La Salle, who arrived in Montreal in the spring of 1666. Most of the island was then in the control of a corporation of priests, styled the Seminary of St. Sulpice. Montreal was very much exposed to Indian attacks, and the priests wanted to extend a thin line of settlements along the front of their island to serve as protecting outposts. So they granted to La Salle, on easy terms, a large tract of land some eight or nine miles up the river. Though the tract was dangerously exposed, its situation was very advantageous for the fur trade, and La Salle soon interested others in the enterprise and began the improvement of his domain. He laid out the boundaries of a palisaded village, assigning to each settler about a third of an acre within the inclosure and about forty acres outside. For his own personal use he reserved three hundred acres and built on it a stout stone house near the waterside.

The Indians soon began to visit the secluded settlement, and La Salle learned the languages and dialects of seven or eight different tribes. Some of the more western of these visitors told him of a river called the Ohio which started in their country and flowed toward the sunset to a sea that was many months' journey distant. La Salle shared the common fancy of the times that a passage might exist through the American continent to the South Sea, and he concluded that this Ohio River flowed into the Gulf of California. He was eager to explore it, and in order to gain the means for the journey he induced the Seminary to buy back most of his Lachine domain, and he found another customer for the rest. The expedition started in midsummer, 1669, and it reached the Ohio and followed that river down as far as Louisville. Then various troubles and difficulties obliged La Salle to turn back. On his return to civilization Lachine received the name it bears in derision of the young explorer's attempt to find a western passage to China.

Lachine had an anxious time in its early years, for it was peculiarly open to the raids of the warlike and powerful Iroquois. Champlain had come into violent collision with these Indians soon after the first permanent settlement was made in the St. Lawrence valley, and they had never been really friendly with the French since. That they were not always openly hostile was due to diplomacy and the efforts of the missionaries. Circumstances led them to a somewhat loose alliance with the English, and they helped the latter to divert the fur trade of the Great Lakes away from the St. Lawrence. This trade was almost the only means of subsistence to the French, and when they attempted to retaliate the Iroquois could be restrained no longer. The result was that in 1689 there was great suffering in all the little settlements

on the upper river. No one was safe who ventured out of the hastily-built stockade forts, the fields were left untilld, and the Indians prowled about waylaying convoys and killing or capturing stragglers. Their movements were so mysterious and their attacks so sudden that the settlers lived in a state of constant dread.

One night a violent hail-storm burst over Lake St. Louis. In the midst of this tempest fifteen hundred Iroquois warriors landed at Lachine, and posted themselves unperceived about the houses of the sleeping settlers. Then they screeched their warwhoop, and began the most frightful massacre in Canadian history. The houses were burned, and men, women and children indiscriminately butchered. In the neighborhood were several stockade forts, and only three miles away was an encampment of two hundred soldiers. At four o'clock in the morning the troops in the camp heard a cannon-shot from one of the forts. They were at once ordered under arms. Soon afterward, a man, just escaped from the massacre, came running to them, and after telling his story, hurried on toward Montreal. Then a number of fugitives appeared, chased by a band of Iroquois, who gave over the pursuit at sight of the soldiers, but pillaged several houses before their eyes.

Presently, when about a hundred armed inhabitants had joined the troops they moved together toward Lachine. The houses were still burning, and the bodies of their inmates were strewn among them. An escaped prisoner brought the information that the Indians were all encamped a mile and a half farther on, most of them helplessly drunk with brandy taken from the houses of the traders. The leader of the troops would have led his force against them, but just then orders came from the governor at Montreal to run no risks and stand solely on the defensive. They therefore retired to one of the forts. The next day a detachment of eighty men from another fort attempted to join them; but they were attacked by the Iroquois, who had slept off the effect of their orgies, and in full sight of their fellow-soldiers were nearly all killed or captured.

Montreal was wild with terror, though it was fortified with palisades and there were troops in the town under the governor himself. The fears of the panic-stricken people were not realized, for town and forts were left unmolested. The Indians contented themselves with burning all the houses and barns for nine miles around, while small parties pillaged and scalped at twice that distance. Their own losses were insignificant, consisting of a few warriors killed and three drunken stragglers captured. These prisoners, when they came to their senses, defied their guards and fought with such ferocity that it was necessary to shoot them.



An old farmhouse [To List](#)

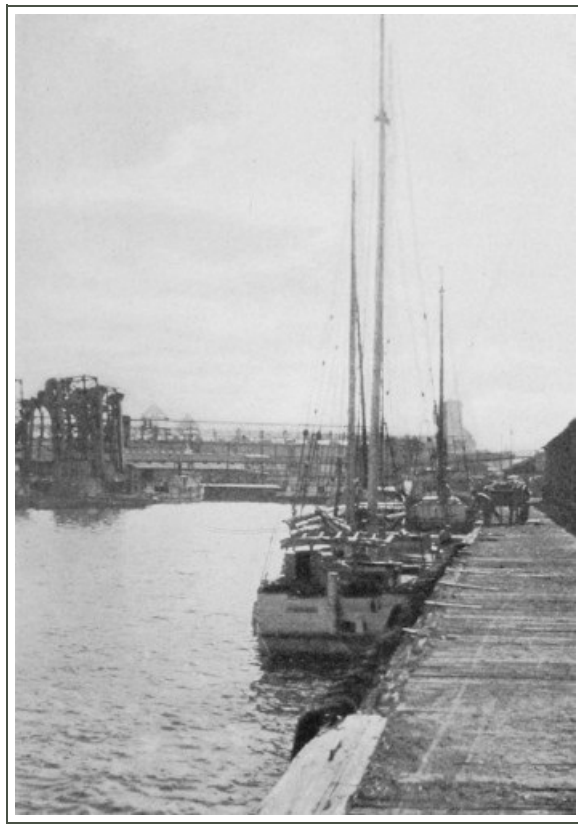
For two months the invaders continued to roam the vicinity, and then most of them took to their canoes and recrossed Lake St. Louis in a body, giving ninety yells to show they had that number of prisoners in their clutches. There were enough other captives to make fully one hundred and twenty in all, and about two hundred persons had been killed. The Indians camped on the other side of the lake and began to torture and devour their prisoners, and from the strand of Lachine sorrowing groups of whites saw the fires gleaming along the distant shore where their friends and relatives were suffering. The greater part of the prisoners, however, were reserved to be carried to the towns of the Indians and there tortured for the diversion of the inhabitants.

It was at one time the hope of the French to win over the Iroquois in a body by wholesale conversion to the Faith; but this attempt failed. So beside the St. Lawrence on the south side of the river nearly opposite Lachine they established a village which should be the home of such converts as they could gain. In 1736 the number of warriors at this village of Caughnawaga, a name that means praying Indians, was estimated at three hundred. They could not be trusted to fight their kinsmen, but willingly made forays against the English borders. Like the other Canadian missions Caughnawaga was of value to the Church, the army and the fur trade. It had a chapel, fortifications and storehouses. The present town has a population of nearly three thousand. Its people are devoted adherents of the Roman Catholic faith, and each year, in June, join in the celebration of the Fête Dieu, accoutered in their tribal paint and ornaments.

From the Lachine shore I could see Caughnawaga's slender church spire and close-set homes on the opposite bank vague in the silvery haze of the distance, and I was enticed to go across and visit the place. I journeyed over the river in a rude, stumpy steam ferryboat that made two trips a day. The village was strung along on a low rocky bluff that affords an agreeable outlook on the swift, clear river. There was no apparent method in the layout of the town. The streets went helter-skelter, and the houses seemed placed by chance, with very little foresight in the matter of personal or community convenience. Through the midst of the homes that gathered along the riverfront there was a straggling ungraded stony road with plenty of mudholes for variety. It was irregularly rutted with the tracks of wheels that showed how the teams had wandered hither and thither in a hopeless attempt to find a route that was both firm and smooth. One short portion of the street had a few shade trees, and there were often unkempt fruit trees back of the houses. Some of these houses were reasonably large and well-built, but the majority were small and shabby. Occasionally the walls were of logs, but frame houses were more common, and there were a considerable number made of stone. To repair or improve a building was evidently a last resort, and you felt yourself to be in a community of incompetents or of persons with some curious mental bias. Many of the men are employees in the outlying Montreal manufactories and do fairly well, though very rarely becoming skilled workmen. Near the houses were little gardens where grew corn, potatoes and weeds. I observed no tendency to cultivate flowers or to in any way beautify the surroundings of the dwellings. In a number of houses a room or a corner of it was devoted to a little store, and there was a display of goods in the front window. But the window was ill-suited for such use, and the goods were too unattractive in themselves and too poorly displayed to be tempting.

The church was large and substantial, and its gritty, deep-worn floor attested the devotion of the Indians to their religion. I could not help fancying that the gaudiness of the altar decorations and the sufferings depicted in the colored pictures on the walls had something to do with the worshippers' attachment to the church. On the borders of the village was their cemetery surrounded by a stout wire fence. A few of the graves were marked with stones, but most had merely a wooden cross set up that in a few years would decay and disappear.

Caughnawaga has a melancholy connection with one of the most tragic events in the history of New England—the destruction of Deerfield by the French and Indians in 1704. Many captives were taken through the winter snows to Canada, and Eunice Williams, the little daughter of the Deerfield minister, was lodged among these mission Indians. Most of the captives were ransomed later, but the Indians, or the missionaries in their name, would not let the little girl go. Her father visited her soon after she had been sent to the mission, and lest she should become a convert to the Catholic religion, exhorted her to remember all the pious teachings of her home. “She is there still,” writes Williams two years later, “and has forgotten to speak English.” What grieved him still more, she had forgotten her catechism.



*Sailing vessels at the Montreal
wharves* [To List](#)

Time went on, and Eunice Williams, the namesake of her mother who had been slaughtered on the march northward, remained in the wigwams of the Caughnawagas. She was baptized and eventually married an Indian of the tribe, who thenceforward called himself Williams. Their children therefore bore her family name. Her father, who went back to his parish at Deerfield, never ceased to pray for her return to her country and her faith. She actually made a visit to her relations in 1740, dressed as a squaw and wrapped in an Indian blanket; but nothing would persuade her to stay. On one occasion she was induced to put on civilized dress and go to church; yet immediately after the service she impatiently discarded her gown and resumed her blanket. She came again the next year, bringing two of her half-breed children, and twice afterward repeated the visit. She and her husband were offered a tract of land if they would settle in New England; but she positively refused saying that it would endanger her soul. She lived to a great age, a squaw to the last.

The case of Eunice Williams was far from being an isolated one, and a missionary at the Indian town of St. Francis, writing in 1866, remarks, "If one should trace out all the English families brought into Canada by the Indians, one would be astonished at the number of persons who today are indebted to these savages for the blessing of being Catholics and the advantage of being Canadians."

A little below Caughnawaga are the Lachine Rapids with a fall of forty-five feet. Not many years ago long rowboats manned by the Indians used to shoot the rapids conveying parties of tourists but the present-day Indians seem to have less aquatic skill than their predecessors, and the pastime has been abandoned. To look at the white tumult of the rushing flood one would not think a small boat could withstand the stress, but the Indians were so thoroughly acquainted with the shoals and rocks and the frantic humors of the fierce current that the feat was accomplished with safety.

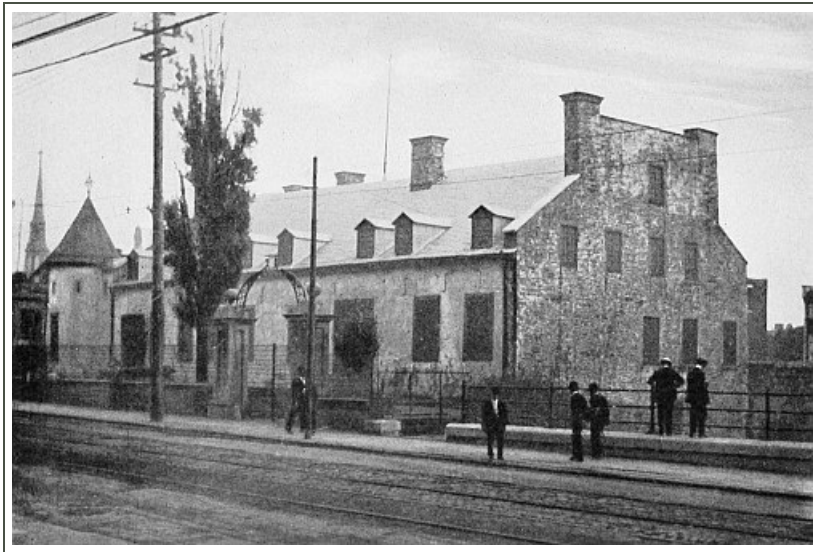
The first white man to brave these rapids was a youth who, on the tenth of June, 1611, went with two Indians to shoot herons on an island. He was drowned on the way down. A few days later another white man came down safely with a party of Hurons among whom he had spent the winter. Champlain was the third to make the descent. He had been conferring with the Indians at the upper end of the island, and they took him down the rapids in their birchen boats, somewhat to the discomposure of his nerves, as he admits.

Of course the modern passage down the rapids in a steamboat is comparatively prosaic, but there is nevertheless a certain sense of peril, and it is reassuring to know that not an accident of any consequence has happened, nor has a single life been lost for many years. As the vessel approaches the really tumultuous part of the rapids there is a long prelude of

swift water that boils and writhes ominously. At length the current roughens into foamy surges and you can feel the gripping clutches of the demoniac water beneath the boat. Yet the motion of the vessel never becomes so violent as to be dismaying. It is simply a slide down a turbulent liquid hill, and only some very unlikely internal disablement of the vessel could produce a possibility of disaster. The wilder portion of the rapids is passed in a few minutes and the boat is again in a torrent that only heaves and twists.

It was late in the afternoon of a beautiful September day that I made the trip. The atmosphere was clear, and I could look far off over the broad landscape, and in the remote east could see some mountain ranges lying blue and serene along the horizon. The near shore of Montreal Island was luxuriantly fringed with trees amid which I got glimpses of homes dotted along near the waterside, while on ahead, golden in the light of sunset, was the smoke-plumed, wide-spreading city with its many spires and domes, and behind it the guardian height of Mount Royal. The steamer was still in mid-stream and there was not yet any cessation in the boiling swiftness of the current when we passed between two of the mighty piers of the Victoria Bridge. Not until we were in the harbor close to our dock did we reach quiet water.

The rapids all occur between Prescott and Montreal, and the journey down requires only a few hours, but the steamer's return with the necessity of moving slowly in the canals and loitering through numerous locks consumes a night and part of two days. In early times, before the advent of the canals, this up-river journey in small boats was not only slow but arduous. One of the Jesuit missionaries writing of his experiences in climbing the rapids says:



The Chateau de Ramezay [To List](#)

“It is often necessary to alight from the canoe and walk in the river. The canoe is grasped with the hand and dragged behind, two men usually sufficing for this. I sometimes took a hand in helping my savages; but the bottom of the river is full of stones so sharp that I could not walk long, being barefooted. There are portages of one, two and three leagues, and it is necessary to carry all the baggage through woods or over high and troublesome rocks, as well as the canoes themselves. This is not done without much work, for several trips must be made, no matter how few packages one has.”

To preserve the good nature of his “savages” the missionary tried to never keep them waiting when they were ready to embark, and at the portages he helped with the burdens. Even if he carried no more than a kettle the Indians were pleased. He was provided with a “burning-mirror” which he used on sunny days to make a mid-day campfire or light the boatmen's pipes; and he had a tinder-box to start a fire in the evening.

The canals around the Cascade, Cedar and Coteau Rapids were begun at the time of the American Revolution and were the first on this continent. Not until long afterward was work started on the Lachine Canal, and it was 1821 when it was ready for use.

IV

EARLY MONTREAL

The situation of Montreal makes it a natural center of human travel and traffic. It is at the foot of the last of the Lawrence rapids, and near the mouth of the Ottawa which comes in from the north, and it is within a short distance overland of the Richelieu which flows from the south. This position was of importance even in the prehistoric Indian days. Many a barbaric fight must have taken place in the neighborhood, and many a canoe full of painted warriors must have crept stealthily along the shore of Montreal Island with intent to surprise their enemies.

Cartier had found a populous Indian town at the foot of Mount Royal, but when Champlain visited the island in 1603 the town had vanished. Doubtless enemies had wiped it out. Montreal was the gateway to the Indian country west and north, and in 1611 Champlain resorted thither to consider establishing there a permanent trading-post. It was about the time of year that the Indians from the far interior brought their furs down the river, and a crowd of adventurers eager to barter for this wilderness wealth followed in Champlain's wake in a fleet of boats and small vessels. Shortly after they reached their destination a party of Hurons was seen coming down the Lachine Rapids, their birch canoes dancing through the foam and spray of the angry torrent. As they drew near the landing, the fur-traders blazed out a clattering fusillade of welcome—a form of greeting so unfamiliar to the savages that they were greatly terrified, and it was only after a good deal of hesitation that they would venture to land. Other parties of Indians arrived later and they all camped along the waterside.

The traders, in jealous competition for the beaver skins the savages had brought, left them no peace, and they were increasingly alarmed and suspicious. Late one night they awakened Champlain and conducted him to their camp where the whole company was in solemn conclave around the glimmering firelight. They trusted him, but were convinced that the lawless bands of rival traders intended to plunder and kill them. Champlain tried in vain to reassure the perturbed warriors. They were so vividly impressed with the fancied peril of their present position that they removed in a body to the borders of Lake St. Louis a number of miles up the river, thus placing the rapids between them and the objects of their alarm.

Champlain concluded that conditions were not propitious for establishing a permanent colony at Montreal. Its importance as a trading-post grew, however, though it was occupied only a part of the year until 1642. The settlement of the place at that time was due to some religious enthusiasts in France, one of whom was commanded in a vision to become the founder of a new order of hospital nuns on the Island of Montreal in the St. Lawrence. He interested others in the project, and at length an expedition was dispatched under the command of a devout and gallant gentleman named Maisonneuve, who mustered forty men and four women for the enterprise.

After they had started on their voyage across the Atlantic the French Associates who were responsible for the new settlement that was to be founded in the wilderness gathered at Paris in the Church of Notre Dame. There, before the altar of the Virgin, they consecrated the settlement to the Holy Family and named it Villemarie de Montreal.

The voyagers arrived at Quebec in 1641, but too late to ascend to Montreal that season. During the winter they built boats, and early in May they embarked to go on up the river. The boats consisted of a pinnace, a flat-bottomed craft moved by sails, and two rowboats. Deep-laden with men, arms and stores, the boats moved slowly on their way, and on the eighteenth of the month the little company landed where the great docks of the modern city now are. Here a rivulet joined the St. Lawrence, and beyond a meadow that bordered the brook rose the forest.

Maisonneuve sprang ashore and fell on his knees. His followers imitated his example, and all joined their voices in songs of thanksgiving. Afterward they erected an altar and transferred their goods to the shore. Presently the twilight came on and fireflies twinkled over the darkening meadow. Then the pioneers pitched their tents, lighted their bivouac fires, stationed their guards and lay down to rest.

In the morning work was resumed. Maisonneuve himself hewed down the first tree to be used in making a strong palisade around their camp. This palisade was soon completed, a chapel of bark was built to protect their altar, and log cabins to take the place of the tents. On Sundays they would stroll over the meadow and among the trees of the forest.

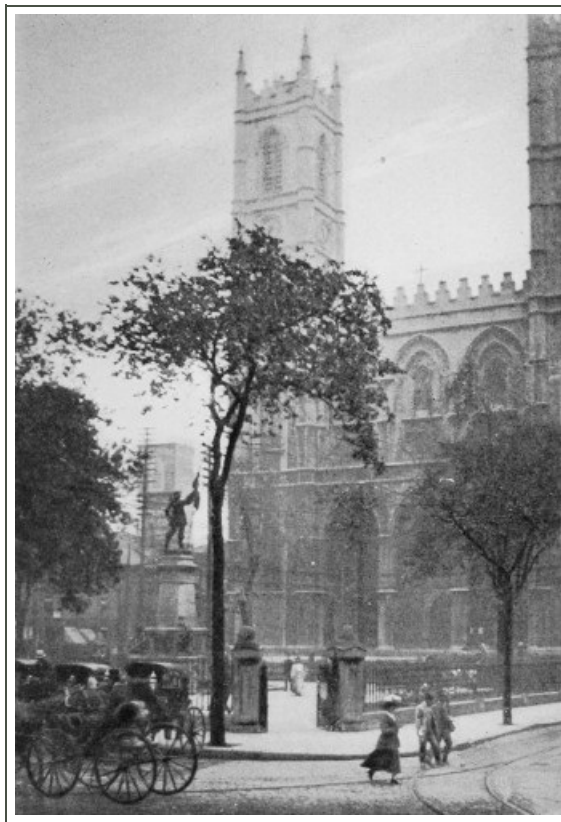
The summer passed prosperously, but in December the St. Lawrence rose threateningly. They tried the efficacy of prayer, and Maisonneuve planted a wooden cross in the path of the advancing flood and vowed that should it spare their settlement he would bear another cross on his shoulders up the neighboring mountain, and place it on the summit. The water continued to rise, filled the fort ditch and crept up to the foot of the palisade; but there it stopped, and at length it receded to its proper channel. In order to fulfill his promise, Maisonneuve now set his men at work to clear a path through the forest to the top of the mountain. A large cross was made, and the inhabitants went in solemn procession to the destined spot the commandant walking in the rear and carrying the cross, which was so heavy it taxed his utmost strength to climb the steep and rugged path. They planted the sacred symbol on the highest crest, and all knelt in adoration before it. There the cross long remained, an object of pilgrimage to the pious colonists of Villemarie.

The next year new recruits came from France, and some progress was made in converting the Indians. Quebec and Three Rivers were the only other settlements in the great valley. These and the scattered missions had a total white population of scarcely more than three hundred souls, and comprised the whole of New France. None of the river settlements were safe from Indian forays, and Montreal was particularly exposed. It was an outpost almost in the path of the war parties, and in 1643 those human wolves of the forest, the Iroquois, discovered the new village. Thenceforth its inhabitants had no peace. The men were obliged to go armed to their work, and they returned at the sound of a bell, marching in compact order prepared for an attack.

Three of a party of six who were hewing timber within gunshot of the fort were killed and the rest taken prisoners. One of these prisoners later escaped, but the other two were burned alive. Sometimes a solitary savage skulking in the woodland terrorized the community, and again a hundred or more warriors hovered in the vicinity.

A number of dogs that were brought from France proved a great aid in scenting the presence of foes. Chief among these was a female named Pilot, who every morning made it her habit to go the rounds of the adjacent fields and forest with a troop of her offspring at her heels. When she detected any of the Iroquois she set up a furious barking and the entire squad of dogs ran pell-mell to the fort.

On the morning of March 30, 1644, Pilot and her followers came running over the clearing from the eastward, all giving tongue together with unusual vehemence. The men in the fort wanted to go to the woods and see if the enemy was really there. Maisonneuve, who had taken care to avoid risks in the past to a degree that made some of his soldiers murmur and hint that he lacked courage, now responded that they might make ready and he would lead them himself. When preparations were complete, thirty men left the fort and betook themselves to the forest, wading cautiously along through the deep snow until they were greeted with the screeches of a numerous body of Iroquois who sprang up from their lurking places and showered the French with bullets and arrows.



*The Place d'Armes and Notre
Dame Cathedral* [To List](#)

Maisonneuve ordered his men to shelter themselves behind the trees, and there they made a resolute defence for a long time; but the Iroquois were creeping closer, three of the whites were already killed, several were wounded, and their ammunition was failing. A retreat was begun, steady at first, but gradually becoming confused through the eagerness of the men to escape from the galling fire of the Indians. The commandant remained at the rear, aiding the wounded and encouraging the others of his party, who from time to time paused to fire back and check the pursuit. When they presently got to a sledge track where the snow was firm underfoot the men could restrain their terror no longer, and they ran in a body for the fort.

Maisonneuve was left alone, retreating backward and holding his pursuers in check with a pistol in each hand. The chief of the savages made a dash at the Frenchman, hoping to take him prisoner. Maisonneuve snapped his pistol at him, but it missed fire. The Iroquois had, however, paused a moment, and as he again sprang forward Maisonneuve with his remaining pistol shot him dead. In the confusion that followed, the French commander reached the shelter of the fort in safety. The spot where he fired the shot that saved him is now known, in commemoration of his deed, as the Place d'Armes, and is a small park in front of the great Notre Dame Cathedral in the heart of the city.

Montreal grew slowly and in 1659 it consisted of about forty small dwellings ranged parallel to the river, a little back from the waterside. On the left was a fort, and on rising ground at the right was a massive stone windmill enclosed with a palisade pierced for musketry, and answering the purpose of a blockhouse. From the borders of the hamlet, fields studded with charred and blackened stumps, between which crops were growing, stretched away to the edges of the neighboring forest, and a mile away rose the grim, shaggy Mount Royal. The laborers always carried their guns to the fields, and often had need to use them. There was, however, no important affray in the vicinity until 1689 when the great Indian massacre at Lachine occurred.

Anxiety lest there should be other assaults by the savages long continued, and the very next year it was reported that Lake St. Louis was all covered with canoes coming down the river. The people of Montreal were much startled, cannon were fired to call in the troops from the detached posts, and the wildest excitement prevailed until it was learned that the canoes conveyed friends, not enemies. The Indians were from the upper lakes and were coming to market with their beaver skins. For several years they had done their trading with the English, but reports of English and Iroquois defeats had made them turn again to the French. They all descended the rapids and landed near the town, and a few days later

another large fleet of fur-laden canoes, manned by French traders, arrived. Never had Canada experienced such an inflow of wealth.

The Indians painted, greased and befeathered themselves, and then mustered for the grand council that always preceded the opening of the market. Frontenac, at that time governor of New France, was present, and roused the savages to enthusiasm by taking a hatchet, brandishing it in the air and singing a war-song. The principal Frenchmen who were with him followed his example, and the whole assembly fell to stamping and screeching like madmen.

Then came a solemn war-feast. Two oxen and six large dogs had been chopped to pieces for the occasion, and boiled with a quantity of prunes; and there was wine and an abundance of tobacco. Both whites and Indians agreed to wage war to the death on the Iroquois and English. Scarcely was the feast over when reports came of a hostile English expedition coming down the Richelieu from Lake Champlain. Preparations were made to meet this force, but the days passed and the enemy did not appear. Frontenac concluded that they had been needlessly alarmed, and the Indians, who would delay their homeward voyage no longer, were dismissed with ample presents. But soon afterward cannon were heard booming on the opposite shore. The settlement of La Prairie had been attacked by a raiding party of twenty-nine whites and one hundred and twenty Indians. A guard of French soldiers at La Prairie was assisting the inhabitants to reap in the wheatfields. Twenty-five were killed or captured, many cattle were destroyed, and houses and barns and hayricks burned.



*At the entrance to the Lachine
Canal* [To List](#)

This much done, the invaders sat down in the woods to eat dinner, while cannon answered cannon from Chambly and Montreal and the fort at La Prairie. The English were not in the least frightened by all this noise. Indeed, they seemed to find it entertaining, for the commander in describing the experience wrote that: “We thanked the Governor of Canada for his salute of heavy artillery during our meal.”

The expedition, as originally planned, contemplated the capture of Montreal, but mismanagement ruined it almost at the start, and only this handful attempted to go to Canada. Nor was their success of any actual advantage. The blow they dealt was, in fact, less an injury to the French than an insult.

It was the Indians, rather than the English, who were the real scourge of Canada; but the savages suffered such serious reverses themselves in their warfare against the French that more than once they made overtures for peace. The whites

were quite ready to cease hostilities on condition that the savages should return their captives, and in 1700 a deputation of Iroquois warriors came to Montreal and delivered up thirteen prisoners. There were other French captives in their villages, but these had become attached to Indian life and would not leave it. After some palaver peace was made, and the Governor of the colony said: "I bury the hatchet in a deep hole, and over the hole I place a great rock, and over the rock I turn a river, that the hatchet may never be dug up again."

To confirm the treaty a grand council of all concerned met in Montreal the next year. The Iroquois and the western and northern Indians came down the river in hundreds of canoes and were greeted by a salute of cannon. A great quantity of evergreen boughs had been gathered for their use, and of these they made their wigwams outside the palisades. When the conference began one great difficulty was encountered. Both the Iroquois and the other Indians, their enemies, who were the allies of the French, had many prisoners they had captured from each other, and it had been agreed that these should be brought to the council for a general exchange. But only the allies had complied, and they were greatly incensed at the failure of the Iroquois to do as they had done. Their leader, a chief known as "The Rat," though so weakened by fever that he could not stand, made a two-hour speech to the assembly, seated in an arm-chair. When the meeting ended, he was completely exhausted, and he died that night.

The French charged themselves with the funeral rites. On a robe of beaver skin, in his wigwam, the dead chief lay in state swathed in a scarlet blanket, with a kettle, a gun and a sword at his side to be buried with him for his use in the world of spirits. Though the Iroquois were his deadliest foes, sixty of them came in solemn procession, ranged themselves around his bier and one of them delivered an eulogy in which he declared that the sun had covered its face that day in grief for the great Huron. When he was buried an escort of troops led the funeral train, followed by sixteen Huron warriors clad in robes of beaver skin, marching by fours with blackened faces and guns reversed. Then came the clergy, and next six war-chiefs carrying the coffin. It was decorated with flowers, and on it lay a plumed hat, a sword and a gorget. Behind it came numerous other warriors and French military officers. After the service the soldiers fired three volleys over the grave. All this ceremony pleased the Indians and helped to a final agreement with regard to the articles of peace.

The fourth of August was named for the grand council. A vast oblong space on a plain near the town was enclosed with a fence of branches. Troops were stationed along the sides, and at one end was a canopy of boughs under which there were seats filled by ladies, officials, and the chief inhabitants of Montreal. The governor sat in front surrounded by interpreters, and the Indians, more than thirteen hundred in number, were seated on the grass around the open space. The savages were painted with divers hues and patterns, and wore their dress of ceremony—leathern shirts that were fringed with scalp-locks, and colored blankets or robes of bison hide and beaver skin, while their heads bristled with crests of hair, eagle feathers, or antlers.

The governor made a speech and a representative of each of the thirty-one tribes which had members present responded. Then the peace pipe was passed around, and the treaty was duly signed, each tribal representative affixing his mark in the shape of some bird, beast, fish or other object.



In the marketplace near the Nelson Monument [To List](#)

With the passing years Indian aggressions became increasingly rare; but the savages as hunters and trappers long continued to be of vital importance in the material welfare of Canada. Early in the eighteenth century small quantities of timber and wheat began to be exported, yet the country was still chiefly dependent on the traffic in beaver skins. To induce the Indians to come to the settlements annual fairs were inaugurated at Montreal and Three Rivers. That at the former place was particularly important, and on the day following the arrival of the fleet of pelt-laden canoes a grand council was held on the common between the river and St. Paul Street. The gathering was a strange medley of Indians, French bush-rangers, greedy traders, priests and nuns, and officials.

In these years of peace the town gradually grew and in 1760 it had nine thousand inhabitants and was somewhat larger than Quebec. Early in September of that year an English expedition landed at Lachine. It had come down the river, and in running the rapids no less than forty-six of its boats had been totally wrecked, and nearly a hundred men drowned. But this was far from crippling it, and the invaders were soon encamped before the town walls. Montreal was at that time a long narrow assemblage of wooden and stone houses, churches and convents, surrounded by a bastioned stone wall made for defence against Indians, but incapable of resisting cannon. The town was crowded with refugees, and could muster only about twenty-five hundred defenders while the English forces in the vicinity numbered seventeen thousand. To fight would plainly be a waste of life, and the place capitulated. The English had overrun the rest of the valley and all of Canada now became a possession of the British Crown.

France did not lose its colony with unalloyed regret; for there were those to whom it did not seem altogether desirable. Voltaire, writing a year or two previous, said: "France and England are at war for several acres of snow, and are spending in the fight more than the whole of Canada is worth." In the same vein, at another time, he described the country as "covered with snow and ice for eight months of the year, and inhabited by barbarians, bears and beavers."

Similar feeling was voiced by Madame la Pompadour who, when it was learned that Quebec had been taken, is reported to have exclaimed with decidedly more elation than regret: "At last the king will be able to sleep peacefully."

For good or for ill France was no more to control the destiny of "My Lady of the Snows," as Canada is sometimes called. The domain that passed into English hands was of tremendous extent, yet after all it had only a population of seventy thousand at this time. Seldom has a vanquished country been treated with more consideration and generosity. Free exercise of religion was assured to the people, and they were to remain in full enjoyment of their property, including negro and Indian slaves. But a good many of the old patrician families would not change their allegiance and removed to France. This was a great loss to the St. Lawrence country. However, their places were gradually filled by emigrants from England, Scotland and Ireland, and there was an ever-rising tide of thrift and prosperity.

THE MONTREAL OF TODAY

Montreal, with its population of four hundred thousand, is the financial and manufacturing metropolis of the dominion. Yet it is only comparatively recently that it became one of the great American cities. As late as 1810 it had no more than twelve thousand inhabitants, and it did not pass the hundred thousand mark until 1870. The secret of its growth lies in the fact that it occupies the center of a fertile plain nearly as large as England and stands at the head of ocean navigation. Its advantages as a distributing point make it Canada's chief port. Formerly its harbor was inaccessible to vessels drawing more than eleven feet of water on account of shallows down the river, but about 1850 the channel was deepened by dredging to twenty-seven feet, and the largest ships from the Atlantic can now come directly to its piers. Probably most people do not realize that Montreal is three hundred miles nearer to Liverpool than is New York, and one-third of the whole distance to Europe is by way of the smooth waters of the St. Lawrence. The river, however, is closed to navigation from the end of November to the beginning of April.

Montreal is on an island of the same name, and this island is thirty-two miles long and from six to ten miles wide. By far the greater part of the river flows to the south of it, and the city extends from the busy wharves with their great warehouses and steamers and lesser craft back to the steep wooded sides of Mount Royal. The population is constantly becoming more cosmopolitan, yet more than half of it is still French. It is an attractive city in certain sections and occasional spots, but as a whole it impresses the stranger as dirty and dishevelled. Buildings that are dismally old and battered are plentiful right in the business center; and on the outskirts, in most directions, you find a helter-skelter of manufactories with their smoke-belching chimneys and untidy surroundings. But there is no questioning the charm of the fine residence district, or that of the parks, or the attractiveness of many of the city buildings to which age or noble architecture, often combined with impressive size, lend distinction.

In historic interest the structure that excels all others is the Chateau de Ramezay, built by Claude de Ramezay, Governor of Montreal, in 1705. Its age, its association with important events and its quiet and massive dignity combine to make it a fascinating landmark. From the crest of the hill on which it stands a little back from the river, the chateau used to command a wide view of the stream in both directions. But this view is curtailed now by tall buildings that crowd around the old mansion. In front is a narrow grassy yard with two or three old cannon on the sward, and this yard is separated from the busy street by an iron fence with sturdy stone gateposts. The walls of the chateau are fully two feet thick, there are turrets at the corners and dormer windows in its broad, low-reaching roof. In the days of its glory it doubtless ranked as palatial. Within its venerable walls, after the fall of Quebec, in 1760, arrangements were completed for the withdrawal of the last French garrison from Montreal, by which act the finest colony of France became the possession of England. The chateau was then in the heart of the most fashionable and important part of the town, and for years after the British conquest it was the official residence of the English governors.

At the time of the American invasion of Canada, early in the Revolution, three commissioners representing the rebelling colonies were sent to Montreal to attempt to win over the people of this northern realm to the American cause. They held their councils in the Chateau de Ramezay, which was the headquarters of the invading army. One of the commissioners was Benjamin Franklin. In order to prepare printed matter for distribution he brought with him a printer named Mesplat, for there was no printer in Montreal at that time. Mesplat's type cases and hand press were given space in the basement of the chateau and there he did his work. The approach of a hostile force put the commissioners to flight, but Mesplat remained in Montreal where he soon afterward began to publish the weekly *Gazette*, a newspaper still issued, and the oldest in this part of Canada.

In 1778 the chateau became the property of the British Government, and in the century and more following it served various purposes. For a while it was the government headquarters, and there was a time when it housed a normal school, and for another period was in use for a medical branch of Laval University, and it also did duty as an annex to the court house. Finally it came into possession of the Montreal Antiquarian Society, and it today shelters what is perhaps the finest collection of historical works, portraits, and other relics in the country. Could anyone wish it a more appropriate fate?

I was interested in the quaint old rooms and their abounding memorials of the past, and I was no less interested in certain comments of one of the woman guardians of the treasures who criticised in a sociable and friendly way the Americans who visited the chateau. "I never saw such people for hurrying," said she. "They drive to the chateau in their carriages and jump out and run through here as if they were going to a house a-fire. I sometimes ask if the Old Nick is after them. What good do they get from such a hasty glimpse of the things we have here? If I was them I wouldn't take the trouble to get out of the carriages. Of course there are a few not quite so rapid. I remember one man who stopped to look at the picture post cards we have to sell, and he picked up one with the Victoria Bridge on it, and says: 'Is that the bridge I crossed coming into Montreal from America?'"

"“And where do you think you are now but in America?” I said.”



The river road on Montreal Island

[To List](#)

"Your people have an idea that the United States is all there is to the whole continent. I think they do not study geography enough in your schools."

"I have been in New England. Many people from Canada are living in the mill towns there. Once I was in a manufacturing place in Connecticut and rode in an electric car. It was crowded with men, women and children—and yet they spoke not a word of English—nothing but French. 'Great Scott!' I said, 'what a lot of Canadians there are here! Have I got into Montreal without my knowledge?' They were all my compatriots. Every man Jack of 'em was a Canadian."

On the square in front of the neighboring court house formerly stood the town pillory, and here, in 1696, four Iroquois were burned by order of Count Frontenac in reprisal for similar barbarism on the part of the Indians.

Close by, within sight of the serene and stout old chateau, is the chief city market. It is a perfect babel on market days. The country people are there from all the region around with their wagon loads of produce; and thither resort their customers, both dealers and private buyers. They are sure to dispose of everything they bring and never have left-over produce to carry home. Toward the close of the day, if a man has not sold out, he may have to sacrifice something on price, but the best of his load has been disposed of and he can afford to take less for what remains. The most interesting portion of the market is not inside of the great buildings, but in the open of a wide street on the hillside below the Nelson monument. There the wagons back up against a broad walk that affords a chance to partially remove their loads for the purpose of display and still leave a passage along the middle of the walk for customers.

A few blocks distant, on the hill, is the Place d'Armes, a little park now hemmed in by the city but which was the scene of a desperate battle with the Indians in the days of the first settlers. Facing it on the south side is the Cathedral of Notre Dame, with its two lofty towers. In the west tower hangs the *Gros Bourdon*, one of the five largest bells in the world. It weighs twelve tons. In the other tower hangs a chime of bells, second to none in the northland. The church itself can easily contain over ten thousand worshippers, and the only church on this side of the Atlantic which exceeds it in capacity is the famous cathedral in the city of Mexico. With the city crowding close around it, the immensity of the building is not readily realized, though the town vapors make the twin towers loom marvellously. In the dim quiet of the vast interior, after the eyes become accustomed to the twilight, you see that walls and ceiling and pillars, as well as all the furnishings are gorgeously decorated. The abundance of color is perhaps rather florid, yet it is not without an oriental richness that is quite satisfying.

There is a curious superstition that at the point where St. Sulpice and Notre Dame Streets meet, close by the towering cathedral, the wind is always blowing. The situation is naturally breezy; but there is a miraculous explanation of the phenomenon that is far more interesting than any scientific demonstration as to whys and wherefores. It seems that one day, while the church was in process of building, the Wind and the Devil were walking down Notre Dame Street; and the Devil after regarding with a frown of disapproval the graceful outlines of the new edifice rising before him exclaimed: "What is this? I never saw it before."

"Very likely not," responded the Wind, "and I dare you to go in there."

"You dare me to do that, do you?" cried the Devil with a sneer. "Well, I will go in if you will promise to wait here until I come out."

"Agreed," said the Wind.

So his Satanic Majesty went in. But he has not come out yet, and the wind is still waiting for him at the corner.

Another church of notable size that the stranger should not fail to see is the dome-surmounted edifice of St. James' Cathedral, modelled after St. Peter's at Rome. I have named only the two largest churches; but the leisurely visitor will find these far from being the only ones that appeal to his interest; for places of worship abound to such a degree that Montreal has become known as "The City of Churches." Many of the edifices are impressively large, and the architecture of their spires, towers or domes is so varied as to give each church an interesting individuality and distinction.

A building of another sort which persons from the States will find of interest is the plain, antiquated warehouse in Vaudreuil Lane where John Jacob Astor laid the foundations of the Astor millions.

Of all the Montreal structures, probably none is so widely known as the Victoria Bridge, the chief approach to the city from the south. I think most persons are a little disappointed in the actuality. Its resounding name is suggestive of a graceful stateliness, but it is simply a criss-crossing of iron beams resting on monotonous stone piers, and its chief claim to distinction is its great length of a mile and a quarter. There are twenty-five spans. The original bridge was completed in 1859, and the present one, which represents a cost of twenty million dollars, was finished in 1899. It occupies the same piers as the older structure and was put in place without interfering with the traffic. In the middle is a span three hundred and thirty feet long, but the others are about a hundred feet less.

On a clear day you get from the bridge a striking panoramic view of the city with Mount Royal as a background. But a still better view of the place can be had, a little below from Helen's Isle, one of the most delightful of the city parks. This island, the name of which perpetuates that of Champlain's young wife, was purchased with her money by her famous husband. Somewhat later it was for a long period a French military station. To this island Marquis de Levis, the last commander of a French army in New France, retired and burned his flags in the presence of his troops on the night before the surrender of the colony to Great Britain. Here, beneath a "weeping elm," he signed the articles of capitulation.

There is much fine farming land in the outlying region neighboring Montreal, and it is a pleasure to drive or ramble amid the apple orchards, smooth pastures and hay fields and the plots devoted to vegetables, small fruits, corn and oats. To my thinking the farm environment is seen at its best on the lower road to Lachine. The outreaching of the suburbs has made chaos for the first few miles of the road, but beyond is a tranquil, tree-bordered rural thoroughfare winding along the river shore, and worthy even of Paradise. Graceful elms and stalwart Lombardy poplars and the delicate-foliaged

willows are the prevailing trees. They only partially screen the river from sight and allow frequent and enchanting views of the broad, swift stream. There is a constant succession of homes along the way, some of them almost at the waterside. The people seemed to have no fear of ravaging floods. On the bank of most streams, so little above the ordinary level of the current, the buildings could not exist for a single year. The flow of the St. Lawrence, however, is largely equalized by its vast inland reservoirs, the Great Lakes. In June the melting snows of the far north bring the river up about six feet, but the stream can be depended on not to wildly exceed its usual limits, and the people for the most part dwell in safety and peace of mind alongside. The only exceptions are those who occupy certain positions that are unduly exposed to the ice when it breaks up in the spring.

Until recently one of the attractions of this lower road was the quaint old stone house in which La Salle used to live. Even after it became a ruin it was still interesting, but of late its walls have been demolished to make fencing for the too thrifty owner of the property, and only weed-grown remnants remain. Another relic of the past is a windmill not far beyond the La Salle ruin; but it has lost its arms and is a mere stump in a brushy clump of trees. However, buildings that date back into the stirring past of the French régime are not all obliterated or ruinous. Some of the wayside farmhouses and barns are still essentially what they were then, and it is a satisfaction to gaze on their stout-walled simplicity.

The manufacturing town of Lachine presently interrupts the vernal roadway; but farther on the rustic thoroughfare resumes its winding course with bordering farms and summer homes and occasional toll-gates, and idyllic outlooks on the wide, island-dotted Lake St. Louis.

When an opening in the trees or a lift of land gives a view in the other direction Mount Royal's sturdy mass is the dominant note in the landscape. This mountain is in reality the shoulders of a volcano with the head blown off. In prehistoric ages it belched forth molten floods and wrote its daily history against the sky in fire and smoke. At that time it stretched the whole breadth of the island out into the present channel on the south, while in the other direction it swept far back toward the ancient Laurentide ranges. The loftiest fragment of its dismantled body today is Mount Royal which rises nine hundred feet above the sea, and seven hundred and forty above the river. Half a thousand acres of Mount Royal's higher portion is a park where the forest is preserved for the most part in a state of nature. The mountain rises very steeply from behind the city, but the crest of the bluff is easily reached by an incline elevator. A more agreeable way of going up and down, however, is by the winding, shady drives and paths.



The Lake of the Two Mountains [To List](#)

Cartier was the first white man to climb the height, and on it he planted a cross and gave the mountain its name. “Therefrom one sees very far,” he wrote. The view is strikingly impressive. Immediately below, the woodland descends steeply, and gradually merges into the city streets. What a vast array of roofs and brick and stone walls, spires and domes and chimneys! and you hear the dull roar of the multitudinous traffic over the pavements. Beyond, the great landscape is cut in twain by the river. Otherwise it seems an almost unbroken plain to the remote southern horizon where slumber ranges of shadowy mountains. It is a wonderful sight—that wide level with its variegated fields and woodlands and its dappling of blue cloud shadows; and its charm is probably fully as great today as when Cartier looked down on the scene from this same spot.

VI

THE OTTAWA

Just above the Island of Montreal the brown waters of the Ottawa join the clear green flood of the St. Lawrence and for many miles the two flow side by side with apparently no tendency to intermingle. The Ottawa is itself a river of noble proportions, and from its junction with the St. Lawrence for a long distance up is so broad that this portion of it is called a lake—the Lake of the Two Mountains.

The first white person to go up the river was a young man from Champlain's little colony in Quebec, who in 1610 accompanied a party of Indians to their home near the headwaters and wintered with them. The next year another young man, Nicolas de Vignau, did likewise and returned at the end of a twelve-month with a tale of having found a passage through to the northern seas; “for he was the most impudent liar that has been seen for many a day,” says Champlain. But this comment on the adventurer's character was only made after Champlain had personally tested the accuracy of his statements. At first his story was accepted for truth and it was thought that the long-sought route to Asia had at last been revealed. So, in 1613, Champlain sailed up the St. Lawrence to Montreal, and starting from there with five companions in two canoes he set forth to explore the Ottawa. One of his party was an Indian, and another was Nicolas de Vignau.

They advanced up the Lake of the Two Mountains, and kept on till the rapids of Carillon checked their course. So dense and tangled was the bordering forest that they had to trail the canoes along the bank with cords, or push them by main force up the current. In the smoother water above they met some canoes of friendly Indians. One of their number agreed to go on with Champlain, while the most awkward of the Frenchmen went down the river with them. Day after day the explorers paddled steadily onward, and at length, a little beyond the present city of Ottawa, they came in sight of the wild cataracts of Chaudière foaming down the rocks and filling the region with their hoarse voice. On the brink of the plunging torrent Champlain's two Indians took their stand, and with a loud invocation threw tobacco into the stream, an offering to the Manitou of the cataract. This was a customary ceremony here, and was supposed to insure a safe voyage.

The party went on with much labor and scant food, and sometimes, as Champlain affirmed, “plagued beyond all description by the mosquitoes.” One day they had to carry through a pine forest where a tornado had passed, tearing up the trees and piling them one on another in a confusion of roots, trunks and branches. At last they came to Muskrat Lake, by the edge of which was an Indian settlement. Here was a rough clearing where the trees had been burned; but many dead, blackened trunks were still standing, and the ground was cumbered with stumps and charred fragments. In spots, however, the soil had been feebly stirred with hoes of wood or bone and a crop of maize started that was now about four inches high.

When the Indians observed Champlain's canoes approaching, they ran from their scattered bark huts to the shore in amazement at sight of the white men, whom they thought must have fallen from the clouds. But they welcomed the strangers hospitably and soon had a repast of fish ready for them. Champlain asked for an escort to guide him to other Indian settlements beyond, and his request was granted. At length, however, his journey was brought to an end by the discovery that the Indians of the region did not agree with Vignau about the country toward which Champlain was directing his quest for the passage to the northern seas. When Vignau was confronted with their assertions he broke down and confessed himself to be an imposter. The savages counselled that he should be killed at once for his deceit, and added: “Give him to us, and we promise you he shall never lie again.”

But Champlain, who now started homeward, allowed him to return with the rest. The Frenchmen were attended by a fleet of forty canoes bound for Montreal; and on the way, while encamped for the night on an island, one of the Indians was visited with a nightmare. He leaped up screaming that someone was killing him. Instantly all his companions were on their feet, and, fancying an attack was being made by the Iroquois stampeded and ran splashing into the water. They waded out till it was almost up to their necks. Meanwhile the Frenchmen had seized their guns and were looking for the enemy that had caused the panic. Their search was fruitless, and they turned their attention to reassuring the warriors in the stream, who presently waded ashore.

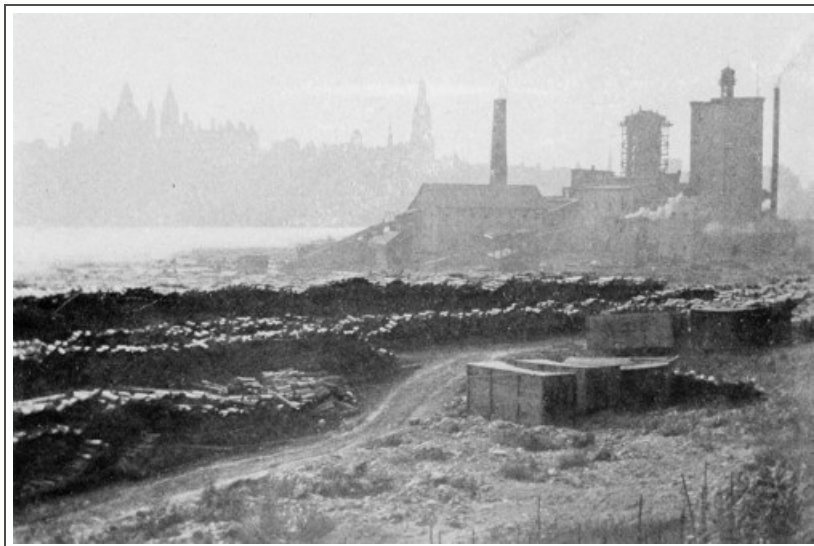
When the party reached Montreal Champlain found there a number of his men. They had been hunting and revelling in

a sylvan abundance while he, with much worry and fatigue, had been making his unavailing search for a passage to China. Nevertheless, the difficulties and disappointments of this trip did not deter him from going on another expedition up the Ottawa two years later. From the headwaters of the river he pushed on even as far as Lake Huron and spent the winter among the Indians. Not until the middle of July did he get back to Quebec, and as the Indians had reported that he was dead, he was welcomed as one risen from the grave.

From the earliest advent of the white man, and the beginning of barter for the furs of the savages, the Ottawa was the main artery of Canada for this trade. It was therefore the constant effort of the Iroquois, who were enemies of the Northwestern tribes and usually antagonized the French as well, to close this thoroughfare so completely that the annual supply of beaver skins would be prevented from passing. They spent the latter part of each winter hunting in the forests between the Ottawa and the upper St. Lawrence, and, when the ice broke up, moved in large bands to the banks of the former and lay in ambush at the carries around the Chaudière Falls and the various rapids. Many conflicts occurred between them and the French, to whom the fur trade was almost the only source of wealth. The most notable of these combats was one that took place in 1660. Indeed, the courageous self-sacrifice of the whites engaged is almost without parallel in the bloody annals of Indian warfare.

It became known in the spring of the year mentioned that unusual numbers of Iroquois had wintered among the forests of the Ottawa. Evidently some mischief was on foot and the conclusion was reached that the settlements on the St. Lawrence were in serious danger. To ward off the impending assault a young officer named Daulac, commandant of the garrison at Montreal, asked the governor of the town for leave to lead a party of volunteers against the enemy. He proposed to waylay them as they descended the river, and fight, no matter what the disparity of force. After some hesitation the governor gave his consent.

Daulac was a person of good family who had come from France three years before at the age of twenty-two. It was said that he had been involved in some affair that had brought disgrace on him, and he was now anxious to win a new reputation by a noteworthy exploit. He invited other young men of Montreal to join in the enterprise, and sixteen responded. They bound themselves to accept no quarter and made their wills; and as they knelt to receive the sacrament for the last time before the altar in the chapel of the Hotel Dieu, the population of the town gazed on them with enthusiasm. Some of the older men begged them to wait till after the spring sowing that they might join in the expedition. But Daulac refused. He wanted both the glory and the danger. The oldest of his comrades was thirty-one, the youngest twenty-one.



*Looking across the Ottawa toward the parliament
buildings* [To List](#)

After a solemn farewell they embarked in several canoes, well supplied with arms and ammunition, and presently entered the mouth of the Ottawa and went up that broad expansion of the river known as the Lake of the Two Mountains. The party had not been long gone from Montreal when some friendly Hurons and Algonquins who stopped there learned of the expedition, and the wish seized them to share the adventure. They asked the governor for a letter recommending them to Daulac, and he complied so far as to write telling Daulac to accept or reject the reinforcement as he saw fit. So

the Indians embarked and paddled in pursuit of the seventeen Frenchmen.

Daulac and his companions had meanwhile passed with difficulty the swift current at Carillon, and about May first they reached the more formidable rapid called the Long Sault. The tumult of waters, foaming among ledges and boulders barred the way, and it was decided to fight the enemy at this place. Just below the rapid, where the forest sloped gently to the shore, stood a palisaded fort, the work of an Algonquin war-party, the previous autumn. It was among the bushes and stumps of the rough clearing made in constructing it, and consisted simply of a circle of small tree-trunks, that was already ruinous. But the Frenchmen took possession of it, and made their fires and slung their kettles on the neighboring shore. Shortly afterward they were joined by the friendly Hurons and Algonquins, to whom Daulac apparently made no objection, and they all bivouacked together.

In a day or two their scouts brought word that five Iroquois in two canoes were coming down the rapids. Daulac had time to place some of his men in ambush at the point where it seemed likely the enemy would land. The canoes approached and were greeted by a volley which was fired in too great excitement to kill all the warriors. One or more escaped into the forest and hurried back to relate their mischance to the rest of the party, two hundred in number, on the river above. Soon the entire fleet of canoes came coursing down the rapids, filled with warriors eager for revenge. The allies had barely time to escape to the fort. They repulsed a desultory attack, and the Iroquois fell to building a rude fortification that would serve them as a shelter in the adjacent forest.

This gave the French a chance to strengthen their own defences. They planted a row of stakes within their palisade, leaving a space between which they filled with earth and stones to the height of a man. About twenty loopholes were made, at each of which three men were stationed. But before this undertaking was finished the Iroquois, who had broken to pieces the birch canoes of the besieged and set fire to the bark rushed up to pile the blazing mass against the palisade. The brisk and steady shots from the fort, however, drove them back. For a second time they made a dash at the fort and again were forced to retreat, leaving many of their number wounded on the ground. Among the fallen was the principal chief of the Senecas. Some of the French ran out, hacked off his head and stuck it on the palisade, while the Iroquois howled in helpless fury. Another attack quickly followed and was repulsed.

This discouraged the enemy and they dispatched a canoe to call to their aid five hundred warriors who were mustered at the mouth of the Richelieu. The two parties had intended to unite in an attack on Montreal, Three Rivers and Quebec. It was exasperating to have the grand enterprise halted by a mere handful of men in a forest fort that was no better than a cattle-pen. For five days and nights the assailants, from behind trees and logs, beset the fort. The allies fought and prayed by turns. Lack of water was their worst handicap. Some of them made a sally to the river and filled such small vessels as they had. Finally they dug a hole in the fort and were rewarded by a little muddy water oozing through the clay.

The situation had grown so harassing that most of the Indian allies deserted to the enemy. Only five remained firm. On the fifth day an uproar of unearthly yells mingled with a clattering salute of musketry, proclaimed the arrival of reinforcements. The five hundred had come from the Richelieu. The crowd of warriors mustered for an attack and cautiously advanced leaping from side to side and firing as they came on. But from every loophole of the fort darted a tongue of fire. The defenders not only had muskets, but heavy musketoons which scattered scraps of lead and iron among the savages, often maiming several at one discharge. The Iroquois fell back discomfited. Three days more wore away in a series of futile attacks. Some of the assailants were now for going home, but the majority were bent on revenge, and it was resolved to make a carefully planned general assault. Large and heavy shields four or five feet high were made by lashing together three split logs, and with these before them the leaders advanced followed by the motley throng of other warriors. This time they reached the palisade, and, crouching below the range of the bullets, hewed furiously with their hatchets to cut a way through.



The River Rideau near Ottawa [To List](#)

Daulac had crammed a large musketoon with powder and plugged the muzzle. He inserted a fuse, lit it and attempted to throw the weapon over the barrier to burst like a grenade among the crowd of savages; but the heavy gun struck the ragged top of one of the palisades, fell back and exploded. By this unfortunate accident several of the defenders were killed and disabled, and others were nearly blinded. In the confusion that followed, the Iroquois got possession of the loopholes, and fired through onto those within. A moment later a breach had been torn in the palisade. Daulac and his surviving followers sprang to defend it. Another breach was made, and then another. Daulac was struck dead, but there were still a few left to keep up the fight. With swords, hatchets and knives they struck and stabbed, till the Iroquois, despairing of taking them alive fired volley after volley and the last one fell. Then there was a burst of triumphant yells.

The victors examined the bodies and found four Frenchmen still breathing. Life was only just flickering in three of them, and the Iroquois lost no time in burning them before they expired. The fourth seemed likely to survive, and they reserved him for future torments. Next they turned their attention to the Indian deserters from the fort. They had promised to treat them as friends, but now they burned several of them, and carried off the rest as captives to meet a similar fate in the Iroquois villages. Five of the number escaped, and it was from them, aided by admissions made long afterward by the Iroquois themselves that all knowledge of Daulac's glorious disaster was derived. This martyr foray was the salvation of the colony. For the time being the hostile savages had had fighting enough.

Settlers were slow to establish themselves in the wilderness along the Ottawa, and for nearly two hundred years the only visitors were trappers and traders. At length, in 1796, a Massachusetts man built his cabin on the shore where the city of Hull now stands, just across the river from Ottawa, the capital of the dominion. But he and a few others who later joined him hardly made a noticeable impression on the wilderness until 1826. Then a government commission arrived to investigate possible routes and the expense of building a canal from the Ottawa to Lake Ontario. The desirability of such a canal was urged by the Duke of Wellington, who, admonished by the War of 1812, thought it best to have a route from western Canada to Montreal independent of the St. Lawrence. This canal presently became a reality, and it winds through a very attractive section of country. Colonel By, one of the government representatives interested in the canal, started a village where the canal entered the Ottawa. This village under the name of Bytown had a population of one thousand within a few months. Twenty years later there were six thousand, and in 1855 the place became a city and changed its name to Ottawa.

For situation no Canadian city except Quebec can rival it. The whole river front presents a succession of bold promontories, some of them rising perpendicularly from the water's edge, clothed with pines and cedars, and separated from each other by small bays.

In 1827, the same year that the canal was begun, work was started on a suspension bridge to cross the river. The initial connection with the opposite bank was obtained by firing a rope from a brass cannon. The first span constructed gave way and fell into the stream. While the second bridge was being built the chain cables broke, precipitating workmen and tools into the channel, and three of the men were drowned. Next a wooden bridge was attempted. It was nearly completed when a gale overturned it and it was carried down the stream. Still another bridge was presently started, and this time the fates were propitious. At least, it was completed; but twelve years later it followed in the wake

of its predecessors by collapsing into the river. Communication was thereafter by ferry until 1843, when the stream was again bridged.



A field on the borders of a village [To List](#)

It was to a large degree a matter of chance that this particular place became the capital of the dominion. At one time Quebec was the capital, at another Toronto. In 1840 the British governor-general effected a union of Upper and Lower Canada and made Kingston the capital. Later Montreal took a turn at being the seat of government, and while it was enjoying this distinction the dominion parliament voted money to pay damages to those who had property destroyed in the “patriots” rebellion. This measure was extremely unpopular with many of the people, and when the governor, Lord Elgin, signed the bill, he was mobbed in the streets. The rioters then went to the House of Parliament, turned out the members, and burned the building to the ground. That settled Montreal's fate as the capital of Canada. Queen Victoria was asked to choose a new site which should be the permanent capital, and in 1857 she selected Ottawa. The place was at that time a moderate-sized lumber town, but the magnificence of its site weighed strongly in its favor, and its position in relation to the population of the dominion was also favorable.

The center of interest in Ottawa is the parliament buildings. These are of imposing size and have not a little dignity and beauty in their architecture. Their attractiveness is much increased by their position on the most commanding bluff overlooking the river and a great sweep of country roundabout. The lumber interests of Ottawa and the city of Hull just across the river are still of great importance, and there are many immense sawmills along the waterside.

Hull, in the early days, was merely a landing place to portage around the neighboring Chaudière Falls and later was a trading post, but is now a great milling and industrial center. It has been devastated by several serious fires, and the conflagration of April, 1900, nearly wiped it out. “The fire was begun by some woman burning a rubbish heap,” a citizen informed me. “An awful wind was blowing that day and the fire got away. It swept everything before it, and great sticks of blazing timber were carried clear across the river and started a fire in Ottawa. There was such a heat it was impossible to get at all near to fight it, and it spread so fast the firemen sometimes had to run to save themselves, and they even had to leave their hose behind. They were driven back so hastily they couldn't turn the water off at the hydrants, and by and by the pressure was lost and they were about helpless. They couldn't do a thing in front of the fire and simply worked to prevent its spreading sidewise. It cleared a strip straight through the town and only stopped when there was nothing more to burn. I knew a carpenter who lost his life in the fire. He had got out of harm's way when he thought of his tools. He couldn't bear to lose them and he ran back to the shop intending to bring them away. That was the last ever seen of him.”

The burnt district was all built up within a few years and every trace of the ten million dollar loss effaced. This recuperative power and the general prosperity of the region is largely due to the abundance of water power. Canada is noted for the number of falls on its streams; but perhaps no district is richer in “white coal,” as this power has been called, than the country around Ottawa. Inside the city limits alone there is one hundred thousand horse power, and within a radius of ten miles as much more. No wonder that the future of the region should be roseate with promise!

VII

THE RICHELIEU AND LAKE CHAMPLAIN

The Lachine Rapids are the last escapade of the St. Lawrence, and thenceforth it moves oceanward with serene majesty. Half way to Quebec the stream expands into Lake St. Peter, and beyond that point, inhaling and exhaling its mighty tides, it is much like an arm of the sea, and its waters presently become as salt as those of the ocean into which it flows.

Lake St. Peter was named by Champlain, who happened to arrive there on the day that belonged to this particular saint. The method he adopted in conferring a name on Lake St. Peter is typical of the habit of the devout early French explorers, and the saints are abundantly in evidence in the nomenclature of the country.

The chief town bordering the Lake is Sorel. I arrived there on the steamer late one Saturday night and went up into the town to find a hotel. At the first place where I stopped I could get no attention from the landlord. He was too busy at his bar serving the crowd of drinkers who are always out in force on the final evening of the week. At the next place I tried I secured a room, though here, also, the bar claimed the landlord's time to such a degree that he seemed to regret even the hastiest formalities, and quickly returned to his thirsty customers.

I recall with somewhat similar interest the way in which I left Sorel. My wish was to go on by train from the other side of the river, and I hired a motor boat to take me across. It was a seven mile trip. Two men went to run the boat, and three more to keep the others company, and they carried along a stout bottle of whiskey from which they imbibed at intervals until I began to fear the liquor might impair their seamanship. It was a relief when the journey ended and I was once more safely on shore.

Two historic tributaries join the great river at Lake St. Peter. These are the Richelieu and the St. Francis. Both were important pathways between the debatable valley of the St. Lawrence and the English settlements that neighbored the Atlantic to the east and south. Up and down these thoroughfares and their lakes passed and repassed the rival races of ancient Canada and New England. The Richelieu, in particular, was a great main war trail. By following it up to Lake Champlain, and continuing thence by Otter Creek and Black River easy entrance was gained to New England. Or, turning westerly at the head of Lake Champlain, and passing through Lake George, only a short portage was needed to reach the Hudson.

The first explorer of the river was Champlain. Near the end of June, 1609, with eleven other white men in a small shallop, and accompanied by a host of Indians in canoes, he left the newly-established town at the foot of Quebec's great rock and went up the St. Lawrence. At the mouth of the Richelieu, where is now the town of Sorel, the warriors encamped for two days hunting, fishing and taking their ease. They quarrelled, also, and as a result three-fourths of them took to their canoes and paddled off home. The rest pursued their course up the placid stream with its endless walls of verdure until it broadened out into the tranquil basin of Chambly. Above were rapids, and the shallop could go no farther. Champlain ordered it to return to Quebec with all but two of his white companions, while he went on to see the "great lake, full of fair islands and bordered with fine countries," of which his allies had told him. The Indians lifted their canoes from the water and bore them on their shoulders half a league through the damps and shadows of the woods to the smoother stream above. There were twenty-four canoes in all and sixty warriors. They observed a certain system in their advance. Some went ahead of the main body as a vanguard, while others were in the forests on the flanks and rear, hunting for the subsistence of the whole. To be sure, they had a provision of parched maize pounded into meal, but they saved this for use when they should be so close to the enemy that hunting would be impossible. Late in the day the party would land, draw up their canoes and range them closely side by side. Rude bark-covered sheds were then made, dry wood was gathered for the fires, and trees were felled with which to form a defensive barricade on the landward side of the canoes and shelters.

In the course of time Champlain came to the lake that now bears his name and went on amid the islands and broad reaches of water to the more open portion whence he could see the forest ridges of the Green Mountains far off in the east, while on the western horizon loomed the Adirondacks.

The vicinity was becoming dangerous, and the party now moved only at night. All day they kept close in their forest camp, sleeping or lounging. About ten o'clock in the evening of July 29th, they approached a projecting point of land, which was probably the promontory since famous under its resounding Iroquois name of Ticonderoga. The word means the "meeting of the waters" and refers to the junction, close by, of Lake Champlain with the outlet of Lake George. As the allies were paddling softly along in the gloom they descried on ahead a flotilla of Iroquois canoes, and both parties began to shriek their war-cries.

The Iroquois, who were near the shore, landed, and, making night hideous with their clamors, began to hack down the trees and erect a barricade. The allies remained on the lake, just beyond bowshot of the enemy, their canoes made fast together by poles lashed across. All night they danced with as much vigor as their situation and the frailty of their vessels would allow, and yelled defiance and abuse at the foe. Champlain and his two followers decided to keep the enemy in ignorance of their presence until later, and toward morning each man lay down out of sight in the bottom of the canoe he was in.



Old Fort Chambly [To List](#)

When the dusky woodland shadows had been dispelled by the increasing light, the allies landed at some distance from the Iroquois. After a time, the latter filed forth from their barricade, two hundred strong, and advanced through the forest toward the invaders. Among them, made conspicuous by tall plumes, were three chiefs. Champlain now stepped out in front of the ranks of the allies, and the Iroquois stared in mute amazement at the warlike apparition. He wore the doublet and long hose then in vogue, and he had buckled on a breastplate and protected his head with a plumed casque. At his side hung his sword, and in his hand he carried his arquebuse, a short gun, something like the modern carbine.

As soon as the Iroquois had a little recovered from their astonishment they made ready to shoot their arrows. Then Champlain leveled his arquebuse which he had loaded with four balls, aimed at the leaders and fired. Two of the chiefs fell dead, and the other was wounded. Immediately Champlain's Indian allies "set up such a yelling that one could not have heard a thunder-clap," and the arrows flew thick from both sides. The Iroquois were greatly astonished and frightened to see their men killed so suddenly and mysteriously, and when one of the other white men fired a shot, they turned and fled. The allies dashed after them, and killed or captured many of the fugitives who abandoned camp, canoes and provisions, and flung down many of their weapons. That night, much to the horror of Champlain, the victors tortured and burned at the stake one of their prisoners.

It was not safe to linger there in the enemy's country, and the allies promptly retreated. Three or four days later they were at the mouth of the Richelieu, and the whites went on down the St. Lawrence to Quebec, while the Indians with their prisoners went in the other direction toward the Ottawa. This single victory satisfied the savages for the time being.

Champlain had by their aid explored an entirely new region and had the promise of their future help in pushing into the unknown to the west and north. In return for these favors he must continue to assist them against the Iroquois. So the next year another foray was planned into the enemy's country. The Montagnais who inhabited the Saguenay region went with Champlain and a number of other whites up the river and established themselves on an island at the mouth of the Richelieu to await the arrival of the confederates, the Hurons and the Ottawa Algonquins. Here they were on the

nineteenth of June when a canoe was seen approaching in frantic haste. As soon as it was near enough for the Indians in the canoe to make themselves heard one of them ceased paddling and shouted that the Algonquins were in the forest, a league distant fighting with a hundred Iroquois warriors who were protected by a barricade of trees.

At once the savages on the island seized their weapons and ran screeching to their canoes. Off they went accompanied by Champlain and four of his men. When the canoes reached a spot opposite the place of conflict the warriors landed and ran into the woods. It was beyond the power of the Frenchmen to keep pace with the light-limbed rabble, who quickly disappeared, and the white men found themselves deserted in the midst of a swamp. The day was sultry, and Champlain says: "The mosquitoes were so thick that we could scarcely draw breath." But they pushed on through mud and water and retarding vines and underbrush until they heard the yells of the combatants. Presently they came to a partial clearing made by the Iroquois axemen. On the borders of it gathered the allies. They had been repulsed and were afraid to renew the assault on the circular breastwork of trunks, boughs and matted foliage that the Iroquois had erected. The Frenchmen began firing, and when these mysterious and terrible assailants, clad in steel and armed with thunderbolts ran up to the barricade and shot death among those within, the defenders were overcome with terror. At every report they fell flat on the ground, and the allies quickly tore an opening in the barricade and the fight was soon over. All the band were killed and scalped except fifteen who were made prisoners and kept to be carried to the Indian villages where they would be put to death by the women and girls with all the tortures that their savage ingenuity could invent. To celebrate the victory the body of one of the slain Iroquois was quartered and eaten, and there was much dancing and singing. Then the canoes were loaded, camp was broken and the victors set out triumphantly for home.



A Lake Champlain ferryboat [To List](#)

As time went on and the numbers of the Europeans in the New World increased, the rival interests of the French and English made the Lake Champlain thoroughfare of vital importance. The advantage of gaining full mastery of it early became evident, and it was not long left without the protection of armed garrisons. In 1664 Fort Chambly, named after its builder, was erected at the foot of the rapids on the Richelieu, only a thirteen-mile portage from the St. Lawrence near Montreal. It was over this ancient portage that the first Canadian railway, begun in 1832, was constructed.

At Chambly there is still a carefully preserved ruin of a stone fortress built in those long-gone times. Its outer walls are for the most part sturdily complete, and it stands in apparent guard over the waterway, at the foot of the rapids, just as of yore. An interesting touch of savage romance was imparted to the place, when I was there, by my finding within a few rods of the fort the stone head of a tomahawk. Who knows what barbaric deeds had been done with that sharpened bit of stone?

In 1731 the French began to intrench themselves on the western side of Lake Champlain at what they called Scalp Point, but which was known as Crown Point by the English. Here, toward its southern end, the lake suddenly contracts to the proportions of a river, so that a few cannon would stop the passage. Fort Frederic, as this advanced post of France was named, was a constant menace to New York and New England.

The English, on their part prepared a string of strongholds extending from Fort William Henry, at the southern end of Lake George, well down toward Albany. Thus did the two jealous powers guard the "Grand Pass."

During the fighting on the shores of Lake George in 1755 the French made intrenchments at Ticonderoga, or Carillon, as they called it, and they busied themselves all the next winter in building a fort on the promontory. This became a hornet's nest from which swarms of savages poured out to infest the highways and byways of the wilderness. The English headquarters were at Fort William Henry and rangers from there were constantly harassing the French. The most notable of these rangers was Major Robert Rogers, and nothing could surpass his adventurous hardihood. In February he and some of his men climbed a hill near Crown Point and made a plan of the works. Then they lay in ambush by an adjacent road and captured a prisoner, and before retreating burned several houses and barns and killed fifty cattle. Shortly afterward they went again to Crown Point, burned more houses and barns and reconnoitred Ticonderoga on the way back. Such excursions were repeated throughout the spring and summer.

But the first notable clash at Ticonderoga between the opposing nations occurred in 1758. The English had assembled at Fort William Henry more than fifteen thousand men, the largest army that had ever been collected in North America. General Abercrombie was the English commander, an elderly man raised to his place by political influence; but the actual direction of the army devolved on Brigadier Lord Howe. The latter was in his thirty-fourth year, and he was full of energy and activity and had the confidence of the army from general to drummer-boy. He had studied the art of forest warfare by joining Rogers and his rangers in their scouting parties, and sharing all their hardships. By his orders officers and men threw off all useless incumbrances, cut their hair close, wore leather leggings to protect them from briars, and carried meal in their knapsacks, which they could at any time cook for themselves. In all such things he himself set the example.

On the fifth of July the whole army embarked in bateaux and canoes on Lake George and the next day landed at its north end. A detachment under Rogers plunged into the woods to lead the way toward Ticonderoga, but presently came unexpectedly on a party of French who greeted them with a volley of musketry. Among those who dropped dead was Lord Howe. This little skirmish wrecked the fortunes of the army, which blundered in nearly every move afterward. When it was sent forward to drive the French from their works by a direct assault it was attempting the impossible. A ridge extended across the plateau northwest of the fortress, and Montcalm, the French commander, had fortified it by felling trees and making a zigzag parapet. In front of the parapet the ground was covered with a tangle of boughs, many of which had sharpened points projecting away from the line of defence to embarrass an approaching foe. On the morning of the eighth the English infantry pressed forward with orders to carry the works by a bayonet charge. But as soon as they got among the bristling boughs the charge was broken and from the zigzag bastions ahead of them came a storm of grape and musket shot to which they could make no effectual reply. They struggled in vain to force their way through the obstructions, and at length retreated. During the afternoon they made no less than six successive assaults and lost two thousand in killed and wounded. Montcalm, with his coat off, for the day was hot, directed the defence, moving to any part of the line where the danger for the moment seemed greatest.



Fort Frederic at Crown Point [To List](#)

It might still have been possible for Abercrombie to adopt some other plan of action that would have been successful, but his spirit and that of his army was broken. The entire force withdrew in a panic, and when the French reconnoitred as far as Lake George the next morning they found several hundred barrels of provisions and a large quantity of baggage that had been left behind; and in a marshy place that the defeated troops had crossed were numerous shoes, which had stuck in the mud, and which they had not stopped to recover.

But while the French were victorious at Ticonderoga they suffered reverses elsewhere, and the next year they felt obliged to relinquish Lake Champlain. When, therefore, an English army again arrived in the vicinity of Ticonderoga and began operations for capturing the stronghold, the garrison slipped away one night in their boats. Shortly afterward a broad fierce glare illumined the promontory and there was a stupendous crash as a mine beneath the fort exploded. But only one bastion had been hurled skyward, and the English took possession and set about repairing the damaged works. Before they were ready to move against Crown Point, that also had been deserted.

With the outbreak of the American Revolution Ticonderoga and Crown Point once more became objects of importance. They commanded the northern approaches to the Hudson River, the strategic center of the whole country. Besides, they contained a vast quantity of military stores that would be a great aid to the colonial recruits. Two expeditions prepared to march against them, one consisting of men from the western hills of Massachusetts under Benedict Arnold, and the other of "Green Mountain Boys" of Vermont under Ethan Allen. The two parties united, with Allen as leader. They reached the east side of the lake on the night of May 9, 1775; but not nearly enough rowboats could be found to convey the men across. Delay would be fatal, and so with only eighty-three followers Allen and Arnold crossed to the other side and at daybreak climbed the ridge to the fortress. The little garrison was completely surprised and surrendered without a struggle. At the same time Crown Point surrendered to another detachment of the colonials.

Ticonderoga was carefully strengthened until it was believed to be impregnable; but a neighboring point which commanded the whole position was neglected. Less than a mile to the south the narrow mountain range between Lakes Champlain and George ends abruptly in a bold crag that rises six hundred feet above the blue waters. The Americans were aware that a hostile battery planted on this eminence would render their stronghold untenable, but they believed it was impossible to get siege guns up the steep ascent. However, when Burgoyne's army, in midsummer, 1777, came from Canada to conquer the Hudson Valley, and arrived in the vicinity of Ticonderoga they at once investigated this mountain. A narrow defile was found screened from the view of the fort, and here relays of men labored breaking out a pathway and dragging up cannon. Great was the astonishment of the garrison on the morning of July fifth to see red coats swarming on the summit of the crag, which the British, rejoicing in their exploit, named Mount Defiance. In another day the cannon on the height would be ready for work. Ticonderoga was no longer tenable, and that night the garrison withdrew across the lake.

In later years the fort was neglected and became a ruin. Roundabout was a great pasture where cows and horses grazed, and the old embankments were much overrun with clumps of thorn trees and cedars and thickets of poplars. But now the ancient fortress is being restored by a private individual, not for warlike purposes but as a matter of historic interest.

It is a fascinating place to visit, and so is old Fort Frederic. The latter is five miles north of the village of Crown Point, and one autumn day I went thither on foot. The weather was not very propitious. There were low-hanging gray clouds that enveloped the hills in filmy mists and at intervals sent down a foggy precipitation. The grass was loaded with waterdrops, the trees kept up a sober dripping, and the walking was decidedly muddy. The road rambled along amid pleasant farming country with the lake often in view. When I reached the fort, the western shore turned at an abrupt angle and the waterway which hitherto had been so narrow as to resemble a sluggish river reached away northward in an expanse of considerable breadth. Right at this angle were the mighty earthworks of the grim old fort. They are still largely intact, and behind them are the ruins of the stone barracks and other buildings. Here and there grow scattered trees to relieve the bareness of the grass-grown embrasures, and up the road just beyond the earthworks that are so suggestive of conflict and untimely death is a peaceful farm with its snug dwelling and broad-roofed barns.

Probably the most widely famous natural attraction in the Lake Champlain region, aside from the lake itself, is the Ausable Chasm. To reach it the traveller leaves the main line of railway at Port Kent and takes a branch line that carries him three miles back inland. Here is a green valley with a little river entering a narrow rift in the big hill that lies between it and Lake Champlain. When I descended by the steep zigzag stairs into the chasm and looked up the stream I had in full sight a beautiful white cascade at the entrance to the defile, and near at hand were lesser falls and tumultuous rapids. I went on down the gorge, sometimes on narrow shelves of rock well up above the water, sometimes on broader masses down by the stream. There was a regular route carefully prepared, with stairs at steep places, and protecting iron railings where the path clung high along the side of the cliff. It was a crooked way, now up, now down, and with many twists and turns. The heights, far above, were crowned with ragged trees, and down below was the gloomy channel and the sinister attenuated stream seemingly black as ink, and streaked with snowy foam. Once in a while there was a rift in the frowning walls, and a damp wooded ravine slanted steeply down to the river, and in the face of the cliffs were numerous small caves and niches. All these features, as well as various oddly fashioned projections, had been duly named and labeled, and, in consequence the chasm has a grotesque museum-like aspect which I did not wholly appreciate. But it is nevertheless a grim and stupendous gorge, and is one of the most impressive specimens of nature's carving east of the Rocky Mountains. After a mile of walking the path comes to an end, and those who choose can continue the journey somewhat farther by boat—a rather exciting voyage if the water is high.

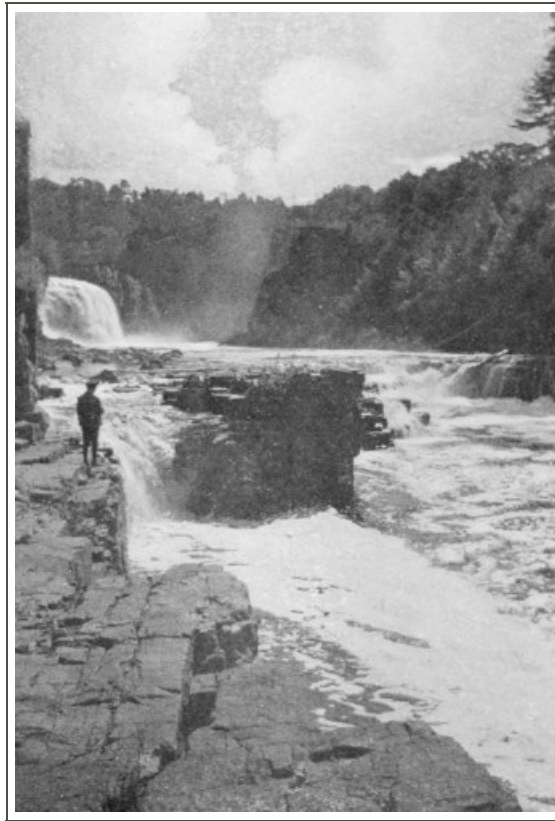
Long ago a highway crossed the chasm by a bridge that spanned one of its deepest portions, and the story is told of a doctor who one day crossed the bridge on horseback to visit a patient in the region. He was detained until late at night. Meanwhile some workmen had started to repair the bridge, and they took up all the planking. When the doctor reached home he was asked by what road he came. He replied that he had crossed the bridge as usual, and as the night was clouded and dark he had not observed but that it was in its ordinary condition. That he had actually crossed it did not seem possible, yet when the bridge was examined the marks of a horse's hoofs were found on one of the stringers, and it was evident he had had an almost miraculous escape from a plunge to death in the wild chasm.

On my return to Port Kent I found the wind blowing briskly, and the blue waters of the lake were lashing the shore in white-capped breakers. It here reaches its greatest breadth, but as the day was clear I could see the opposite shore distinctly and on the horizon were several mountain ranges that seemed imposingly high in the azure distance.

VIII

THE HISTORIC ST. FRANCIS

In pioneer times the importance of the St. Francis River as a highway between the St. Lawrence and the country the south was second only to that of the Richelieu. From the valleys of the Connecticut and of the Merrimac, and thence through the gateway of the wilderness lakes and down the St. Francis passed more English captives to Canada than on all other routes combined. This tributary of the St. Lawrence has known the wail of human distress at every turn in its winding course, and has witnessed many a savage tragedy.



*The waterfalls at the entrance to the
Ausable Chasm* [To List](#)

Near its mouth was an Indian village with the same name as the stream, the inhabitants of which were nominally Christians, though they remained thorough savages in dress, habits and character, and were the scourge of the New England borders. In September, 1759, Major Robert Rogers, who had won much fame as a forest ranger, was sent against this village. He and his men went in bateaux up Lake Champlain to its north end, where they hid the boats and left two friendly Indians on guard. The party then began its march, but on the second day out the two Indians overtook Rogers with the startling intelligence that about four hundred French had found the bateaux and that half the force was on his trail in hot pursuit. Other parties would doubtless soon be warned of his presence in the northern wilderness, and his danger was serious.

He determined, however, to outmarch his pursuers and to go on and strike St. Francis before it could receive help. That done, he would return by way of Lake Memphramagog and the Connecticut River. For nine days more he toiled northward, much of the time through dense spruce swamps with no dry resting-place at night. Then he drew near to his destination, and one day, toward evening, Rogers climbed a tree and descried the town three miles distant.

Accidents, fatigue and illness had reduced his followers to one hundred and forty-two, but he was not dismayed. Accompanied by two officers he went to reconnoitre the place, and on its borders left his companions and entered the

village disguised in Indian garments. He found the savages yelling and singing in the full enjoyment of a grand dance. After a satisfactory survey he rejoined his party, and at three o'clock in the morning he and his men burst in on the town. Many of the warriors were absent, and the rest were asleep. Some were killed in their beds, and others were shot down while trying to escape. In all, fully two hundred of them perished. The women and children were allowed to get away, excepting two boys and three girls who were carried off prisoners. Hundreds of English scalps were dangling from poles over the doors of the houses, and five English captives were found in the place. The town was hastily pillaged and set on fire, and the retreat began. Until the rangers reached Lake Memphramagog they subsisted on corn from the Indian town. Then the supply failed, and they separated into small parties, the better to sustain life by hunting. The enemy was now close behind, and twenty or more of the rangers were killed or captured. After much suffering the rest reached the Connecticut River, and eventually the half-starved remnants of the expedition were welcomed in the outlying settlements. Thus ended one of the most daring wilderness forays on record.

The headwaters of the St. Francis are a tangle of minor streams, the most important one being the outlet for Lakes Magog and Memphramagog. The latter lake, which is the larger of the two, is an immense trough extending north and south across the border line between Vermont and Canada. Its western shore is bold and striking, being skirted by a detachment of the Green Mountains, the main range of which can be seen careering along the horizon far in the southwest. To the east and north, however, the country is flat and monotonous.

Not far from the junction of the waters of this lake with those of the St. Francis stands Sherbrooke, the city of fairs, whose tapering spires on the neighboring hillslopes are visible for miles around. The fairs which have given it such wide fame are an annual autumn institution. They begin on Monday and last five days. Visitors journey hundreds of miles to enjoy the occasion. It is an all-round show, contrived to suit both the agricultural and the sporting elements. For the delectation of the former there are farm exhibits in endless variety. I suppose the pleasure-seekers from a distance are also to some degree interested in the farm products, and they enjoy the stimulus of the crowd and the individuality of the rustics who have flocked in from the country, but they are present chiefly for the racing and betting.

The town is only a little beyond the American borders, yet it is in most respects typically Canadian. Two-thirds of the people are French, and the dividing line between them and the English is rather sharply drawn. Marriage between the races is rare, partly because as a class the French represent the poor, and the English the well-to-do, but mainly because the difference in religion of the two races is construed to be an impassable barrier to matrimony. French is the language commonly heard on the streets and in the stores and other public places. Much of the instruction in the parochial schools that the Catholics so faithfully attend is in their language, though the children are also obliged to learn English. I wondered if the double burden in the matter of language was not something of a handicap. It is of course not a peculiarity of Sherbrooke, for a large portion of Canada is bi-lingual, and public notices are usually printed in both French and English.

An American visitor is likely to consider Sherbrooke's churches one of its most striking features. These are decidedly more prominent than are the churches in places of similar population in the States. Our much-divided Protestants of necessity lag far behind the Catholic Canadians in the impressiveness of their houses of worship. The Canadian parishes include a very large number of people, and the churches seem to be their chief pride. Consequently, the buildings, in size and in the loftiness of their spires, are apt to loom up prominently above all their surroundings. The people in general—men, women and children—can be depended on to be present regularly at Sunday mass, and when the services end the streets are full of returning worshippers. A good many of the men are smoking their pipes as they go plodding homeward. They are inveterate tobacco users—these Canadians—and the boys, with sham smartness, start to puff at pipes and cigarettes pitifully young.

On the pleasant Sunday in early autumn that I was in Sherbrooke, although crowds attended church, these were far from including the entire population. There were loiterers about the houses, and in boats on the water, and I heard the gunshots of hunters rambling in the woods. At the waterside a lad who was fishing told me how a sturgeon had been caught near by a month before. As he described it, the fish was a veritable young whale in size and strength. Indeed two men struggled with it in vain until one of them waded in and jabbed the creature a few times with his jack knife.

While we talked a boatload of boys got stranded out in mid-stream. They splashed and swore, and each gave vigorous orders to the others; but there they stuck hard and fast. My friend said they were on their way to a wild little island which he pointed out, and where he said there were bushels of butternuts to be had for the picking-up. Presently a swarthy-faced woman came down to the shore and shouted directions which finally proved effective. They got off, came

to where the woman was, and she stepped into the boat herself and rowed them to the island.

After mass the churchgoers also became pleasure-seekers, and each person followed his inclination, and rested, or loafed, or amused himself in some more strenuous way. A good many went to the saloons for drink. Nominally the saloons were closed on Sunday, but I observed that the wise knew how to gain entrance by a rap at a secluded door.

Early in the afternoon the students from a Catholic college filed along the sidewalk past my hotel in a procession that seemed for a while likely to prove endless. They were mostly from ten to fifteen years of age, and in their long Prince Albert coats and flat-crowned caps looked awkward and raw. They marched in twos in charge of black-gowned, shovel-hatted priests, and I could not but think of them as machine-educated and repressed, separated from the pleasures and warm affection of home, and living lives pathetically narrow. On this occasion they were going to a playground to spend the afternoon in games. They certainly showed no evidence of frisky and joyous anticipation, and I wondered if the games were not of a sober and lugubrious character supposedly suitable to the day in the ideals of the priestly educators.

Many of the humbler homes of the town were decidedly shabby, carelessly placed, unsubstantial, and often only partially finished. Yet on a Sunday, at least, you may see around these poor dwellings women and children so daintily dressed that you are inclined to doubt that those really are their homes. Apparently they are bound to have fine raiment at all hazards, even if the house goes to pieces over their heads.

The children in a family are pretty sure to be numerous, though, as one man explained, a good many die; and I judged from his tone that he thought this a not altogether undesirable relief from a too heavy burden. He said the people in Sherbrooke were too numerous for the amount of work that was to be had, and when a man lost a job it took him about three months to find another. So it was a common habit with the young men to go to the United States to seek work. But after staying long enough to accumulate a snug sum they were apt to return and buy a little farm.

The St. Francis River is here rather broader than one can throw a stone across, and alternates with swift shallows and smooth depths. The houses and factories of the town along the shore are not very prepossessing, but above and below is pleasant farming country close at hand. That the river was sometimes a furious flood was evident from scars along the banks, and I questioned a young fellow paddling about in a boat as to whether the dwellers in those houses so close to the raging waters did not sometimes furnish victims to the river.



Near the head of tide-water above Three Rivers [To List](#)

“Yes” he replied, “there's one or two drowned every spring. They're usually young ones playin' around the water, and they over-balance, and in they go. I came near getting drowned myself once. I was quite a boy at the time, but I hadn't learned to swim. Another fellow was with me. He was used to being around the river and he wasn't a bit afraid of it. He could stand on a log out in the current just the same as if he was on dry land; and he was showing off what he could do. It looked so easy to ride on a log that I tried it, but the thing went from under me and I got plumped into the water. I couldn't grip it afterward because it kept rolling over and over. I had gone down twice when the other fellow pushed out in a leaky old boat to where I was and grabbed me.”

On the banks were numerous piles of logs among the little houses. These had come down in the floods and were much

battered by ice and rocks with which they had come in contact. Most of the logs had been sawed and split enough so that the fragments could be easily handled. The bank dwellers were sure of two or three floods a year, but these do not furnish as bountiful a harvest of driftwood as formerly. The sawmills allow less to escape them and more people live along shore to catch what is afloat.

“I've seen the stream full of it, years ago,” commented one man; “and there's lots of it comes down yet—Oh, gosh, yes! The families on the bank get all they can burn themselves and there are those who have a surplus to sell.”

Some of the floodwood can be captured from the shore, but the people do not hesitate to go out into the swift current with their boats, drive a hook into a log and row to land with it. Even the ice which accompanies the spring flood does not deter them.

I chatted for a while with a shore dweller whose most conspicuous garment was a long linen duster. He explained very intelligently the characteristics of the river until a church bell began ringing. Then he at once branched off into a strange religious medley to this effect: “God is in jail or He ought to be; and this world is not run right. Most anytime it may tip up and we'll all slide off the edge. When that happens where will Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Bridget and Mary and you and me be? I want you to tell me that.”

His voice rose as he went on, his words came more rapidly, his eyes grew wildly bright, and at frequent intervals he explosively appealed to me to know if what he said was not so. But the man's philosophy was too intricate for my capacity, and I embraced the first opportunity to withdraw. One of his fellow-townsmen later informed me that I had been talking with Billy Bush, and in explanation of his peculiarities said: “A girl give him the cold shoulder when he was young, and he went bughouse over it.”

IX

QUEBEC'S EVENTFUL HISTORY

Samuel de Champlain, the founder of Quebec, was only thirty-six years of age, when, in 1603, he first voyaged up the St. Lawrence; but he was already an experienced and skilful seaman and a practiced soldier. He was a man of great activity, daring and enterprise, and at the same time he was firm, honest and cheerful. To his patrons he was always faithful, and to those under him he was just and considerate. On this first voyage, with two little vessels, he went as far as Montreal, but accomplished nothing more than to gain a knowledge of the river.

Five years later he again came sailing up the St. Lawrence, this time in a single ship, and anchored off the rock of Quebec. The Indian village of Stadacona had crowned the bluff in Cartier's time, but this had disappeared. Champlain was prepared to attempt a permanent settlement, and Quebec's commanding height appealed to him as an excellent site for a fortified post. It was his hope that when the town was once started and the position made secure, expeditions could start thence to explore the waters of the interior and find a western route to China and India. Moreover, the fur trade could be developed, and last, but not least, the souls of the savages could be saved by giving them the Christian religion.

Between the base of the cliff and the river was a gentle wooded slope, a few rods wide, where the marketplace of the lower town now is. Champlain's axemen felled the trees, shaped them into timbers and erected three buildings for the shelter of the colony. These were inclosed by a strong wooden wall behind which was a gallery loopholed for musketry. A moat surrounded the whole, and two or three small cannon were mounted on platforms to command the river. A garden was laid out on the ground adjacent.

One morning, while Champlain was at work in this garden, his pilot approached him with an anxious countenance and requested in a low voice to speak with him in private. They retired into the neighboring woods where the pilot informed his chief that a locksmith named Duval and three accomplices had befooled or frightened nearly the whole company into a plot to kill Champlain, either by strangling him in his bed, or by raising a false alarm in the night and shooting him as he came out from his quarters. They were dissatisfied with the labor of felling trees and of preparing for cultivation ground that was so full of stones, roots and stumps. So they proposed to win a rich reward by delivering Quebec into the hands of a party of Basques that was at Tadousac.

There were a few men on whom Champlain could still depend, and at ten o'clock that night he had the four ringleaders seized. Most of the colony was asleep, but Champlain had everyone roused and told them of the discovery of the plot and of the arrest of Duval and his three comrades. Pardon was then promised to the frightened gathering and they were dismissed to their beds. The next day Duval's body swinging from a gibbet, and his head displayed on a pike from the highest roof of the buildings, food for birds, gave warning to any who might be inclined to plot in the future.

On the lower river was a trading vessel commanded by a merchant named Pontgravé. This had been sent out under the same auspices as the one that brought over Champlain's colony, and in the autumn it carried back to France a portion of the men at Quebec, leaving him with only twenty-eight men to hold the place through the winter. A roving band of Indians came and built huts near the fort and busied themselves catching eels, which were a main reliance for sustaining their miserable lives in the months of frost and snow. After this slimy harvest had been gathered and smoked and dried, they turned it over to Champlain for safe-keeping and went off to hunt beavers. It was midwinter when they came back, and they then settled down to a life of idleness in their smoky birch-bark cabins. Sometimes their dreams or chance noises in the night frightened them into the belief that a war party of their enemies was making a descent on them, and they would go flocking in a body to beg admission into the fort. Champlain allowed the women and children to enter the yard and stay till morning, but he feared treachery if he gave the men the same liberty, and they stood and shivered in the darkness outside.

On one occasion a group of wretched savages appeared on the farther bank of the St. Lawrence evidently desirous to cross. The river was full of drifting ice, but the Indians had canoes and they embarked. Midway the ice caught and destroyed the canoes. The occupants of the boats, however, escaped onto a huge raft of ice, the squaws carrying the children on their shoulders. Then they set up a despairing wail, but happily the ice was driven against the northern shore

and they got safely to land. They were worn to skeletons and nearly famished. Food given them by the French was devoured with frenzied avidity, and then, still unappeased, they took possession of a dead dog that Champlain had left on the snow as a bait for foxes. They broke this carrion into fragments, and thawed and devoured it. Such famine conditions were not unusual among the Algonquins of the lower St. Lawrence, for they never tilled the soil and made no adequate provision against a time of need.



On the St. Francis at Sherbrooke [To List](#)

Toward the end of winter scurvy broke out with virulence among the French, and by the middle of May there were only eight survivors. Pontgravé was back from across the Atlantic the next month, and it was agreed that Champlain, whose health and courage had remained unshaken, should set out to find a way to China. As a means of furthering this enterprise, he had already made an alliance with the Canadian Indians and had agreed to join them in an expedition against their enemies, the Iroquois, who dwelt in fortified villages within the limits of the present state of New York. So in the early summer of 1609 the Hurons and Algonquins resorted to Quebec, pitched their camps and bedecked themselves for a war-dance. The dance occurred in the evening. Plenty of wood had been collected for the fires which blazed brightly and lighted the gloomy face of the cliff, and the glare fell full on the tawny limbs and painted visages of the dancers and on brandishing war-clubs and tomahawks, while the drum kept up its hollow boom, and the air resounded with yells. A feast followed, and the next day the allies embarked to proceed against the Iroquois by way of the river Richelieu.

The expedition was successful from the Indian point of view; for a war-party of the enemy was defeated and the invaders safely retreated. As for Champlain he gained important knowledge of one of the great natural highways of the wilderness, and by his alliance with the savages was enabled to make several long trips later up the Ottawa and to the Great Lakes.

Meanwhile Quebec grew very slowly. In 1615 four Recollect friars arrived there from France. Great was the perplexity of the Indians when these strangely-garbed men landed beneath the rock. Their apparel was mainly composed of a rude garment of coarse gray cloth, girt at the waist with a knotted cord and furnished with a peaked hood, while their feet were shod with thick-soled wooden sandals. They made an altar close by the fortified dwellings and storehouses, and then celebrated the first mass ever said in Canada. Nearly all New France kneeled on the bare earth around the officiating priest, while cannon boomed from the ship and the ramparts.

About a mile back, on the bank of the St. Charles, the friars built for themselves in 1620, a small stone house with ditches and outworks for defence, and here they began a farm and stocked it with a few hogs and fowls and a pair of donkeys. The only other agriculturist in the colony was Louis Hebert who had crossed the Atlantic in 1617 with a wife and three children, and had made for himself a house perched on the rock up above the settlement. The entire permanent population numbered only fifty or sixty, so that the chronicler could not have been very much amiss when he declared that the fort had two old women for garrison and a brace of hens for sentinels.

The same year that the friars built their stone domicile Champlain brought his wife to Quebec. He had married her ten years previous when she was only twelve so that she was still quite youthful. During her four years in Canada, if we can believe tradition, she charmed everyone with her beauty and gentleness, and the Indians wanted to worship her as a divinity.

Nearly all the scanty population of the country consisted of fur-traders and the men in their employ. The few emigrants lounged about the trading-houses, or roved the woods on vagabond hunting excursions. Hostile Indians were prowling around, and in the summer of 1622 the Iroquois made a descent on the settlement, and assailed the Recollect convent on the St. Charles. But while some of the friars prayed in the chapel, the rest with their Indian converts made a brave defence and the attacking party withdrew.

Political intrigue in the homeland affected adversely the fortunes of the colony, and the troubles of the various companies that were granted trading privileges brought it again and again near to ruin. Finally war broke out between France and England. Quebec had passed through a hard winter and in the spring of 1628 was on the verge of starvation. Four armed vessels with a fleet of transports were sent to succor Quebec; but about the same time an English fleet was dispatched for the St. Lawrence on a voyage of conquest. Quebec was incapable of defence. Only fifty pounds of gunpowder were left, and a fort that had been erected a few years before on the cliff, where now is the Dufferin Terrace, was tumbling to ruin. The English arrived in the St. Lawrence ahead of the French fleet and anchored at Tadousac. Some captured Basque fishermen were sent up the river with a message demanding that Champlain should surrender. His response was that he would hold his position to the last. The English commander, deceived by the bold attitude of Champlain, thought it would not be wise to risk attacking the stronghold. He, however, encountered the fleet from France, overpowered it, and all the supplies destined to relieve the hungry tenants of Quebec were either seized or sunk in the river.



The citadel crowned height of Quebec [To List](#)

The miseries of Quebec increased daily, and the four or five score of men, women and children cooped up in the fort subsisted on a scanty pittance of peas and maize. By the time another winter and spring had passed the food stores were wholly exhausted, and the members of the colony betook themselves to the woods to gather acorns and grub up roots. In midsummer three English ships arrived before the town, and there was nothing for the starved and ragged band of French to do but to surrender.

When France and England made peace it was agreed that Canada should be restored to the former power, and

Champlain crossed the ocean once more to the New World and took up his harassing round of cares at the dilapidated hamlet of Quebec. Ten years later he died on Christmas Day, after having worked nearly three decades with unceasing ardor for the welfare of the colony, sacrificing fortune, repose and domestic peace. Shortly after his death fire destroyed the church near which he was buried and the place of his interment was forgotten. But in 1856 some men who were laying water-pipes at the foot of Breakneck Stairs discovered a mouldering coffin and a few bones in a lofty vault. A person of distinction had evidently been buried there, and that person is supposed to have been Champlain, the "Father of New France."

Quebec long continued to lead a precarious existence and the perils of the wilderness still encompassed it in 1658 when the young Vicomte d'Argenson crossed the ocean to become governor of the colony. On the day after he arrived at Quebec, while he was washing his hands before seating himself to dine in the Chateau St. Louis, he was startled by cries of alarm. The Iroquois had made a descent on an outlying home, and their warwhoops and the screams of their victims were distinctly heard. Argenson ran out and, with such a following as he could muster, hastened to the rescue; but the nimble assailants had disappeared in the forests which at that time grew close around the town.

In the years that followed shiploads of emigrants arrived every summer from France and Quebec was growing into a place that seemed to have a good deal of stability and promise for the future. But about ten o'clock one August night in 1682, there was an alarm of fire. Shouts and the ringing of bells roused the people from their slumber, and they ran forth to find the flames burning so fiercely in the Lower Town that it was as light as noonday. Only kettles and buckets were available for throwing water, and the crowd was bewildered with excitement and fright. The buildings were all of wood, and those who attempted to combat the fire had constantly to retreat from the heat and rapidly spreading flames. Toward morning the fire burned itself out. Fifty-five buildings had been destroyed, many of them storehouses filled with goods, so that the property consumed was of greater value than all that remained in Canada.

Before the town had fully recovered from this disaster, trouble was again brewing with the English. Count Frontenac was now governor of New France. He had reached the age of three score years and ten, but the grizzled veteran was still erect and vigorous, and scarcely less keen, fiery and headstrong than he had been in his youth. To teach the English that prudence was advisable and a policy of conciliation toward their Canadian neighbors he sent various war parties, largely made up of savages, to lay waste their border settlements. This, however, so roused the belligerence of the sufferers that a naval expedition was organized to go to the St. Lawrence. On the sixteenth of October, 1690, a fleet of ships, schooners and fishing craft from Boston, all thronged with men, glided into the Basin of Quebec between the town and the Isle of Orleans. Soon a boat left the fleet carrying a messenger with a letter from Admiral Phips to the French commander. At the shore the messenger was blindfolded, and while ostensibly being led to the governor, was conducted hither and thither and made to clamber over all sorts of obstructions. A noisy crowd surrounded him in this progress, hustling him and laughing at his discomfort.

Finally he was brought into the Chateau St. Louis, the bandages were removed from his eyes, and he found himself in a large hall facing the stern and haughty Frontenac and his officers in glittering uniforms. He delivered his letter, which demanded the surrender of all Canada and gave one hour for the preparation of an answer. Frontenac's reply was an immediate negative. When the messenger asked that the answer be put in writing Frontenac said: "I will answer only by the mouths of my cannon."



A byway adjoining the Basilica [To List](#)

The envoy was then blindfolded and sent back as he came. In the days that followed, the ships engaged in a tremendous bombardment that wasted a great deal of ammunition and did no damage worth mentioning. Much was hoped from the efforts of a force of thirteen hundred men that landed east of the St. Charles, and some desperate fighting ensued. They suffered greatly. One night while they were on shore ice formed an inch thick, they were scantily supplied with food, many became sick, and at the end of four days they were withdrawn.

Phips now called a council of officers, and it was resolved that the men should rest a day or two, that there should be a meeting for prayer, and then, if there was sufficient ammunition, another landing should be attempted. But rough weather interfered with the prayer-meeting, and the disheartened New Englanders hauled up their anchors and sailed away. Quebec had meanwhile been awaiting its fate with agitation and alarm. The pinch of famine had begun to be felt, and in another week the place would have been helpless. Now it breathed freely again.

The English were gone, but their allies, the Iroquois, continued to devastate the upper valley, and in 1692 Frontenac, in reprisal for their barbarities, ordered that two Iroquois prisoners who had been brought to Quebec should be burned. One stabbed himself in prison. The other was tortured to death on Cape Diamond by the Christian Hurons, defying them to the last.

During the next two years the Iroquois suffered greatly, and at length a deputation was sent to Quebec to treat for peace. Their garments bespoke their destitute condition. All were dressed in shabby deerskins and old blankets except their chief orator who wore a scarlet coat laced with gold, given him by the governor of New York. Frontenac did his best to win their friendship. He feasted them at his own table and bestowed gifts so liberally that the tattered ambassadors went home in embroidered coats, laced shirts and plumed hats. But in the end the negotiations came to naught.

In the years of comparative peace and security that followed Quebec grew and prospered, but still retained much of the character of a frontier town. Education was neglected, and when early in the eighteenth century a printing press was brought to Quebec, it was looked on with such disfavor that it was sent back whence it came.

Complaint was made that the young men of the place were too much inclined to “run wild in the woods for the sake of a few pelts.” As for the young ladies, here is a description of them from the pen of a traveller who was in Quebec about 1750:

“They are attentive to know the newest fashions, and laugh at each other when they are not dressed to each other's fancy. A girl of eighteen is reckoned poorly off if she cannot enumerate at least twenty lovers. These young ladies, especially those of higher rank, get up at seven and dress till nine, drinking coffee at the same time. Then they place themselves near a window that opens into the street, take up some needle-work, and sew a stitch now and then, but turn their eyes toward the street most of the time. When a young fellow comes in they immediately set aside their work, and begin to chat, laugh and joke.”

The person quoted affirms that the maidens of Montreal felt “very much displeased because those of Quebec get husbands quicker than they.”

The greatest episode in Quebec's history is its capture by the English in 1759. War had been raging for several years, but not until then had the heart of the colony been invaded. In or near Quebec was an army of sixteen thousand men, under the command of Montcalm, an officer of great ability who had rendered his country distinguished service. He was a man of culture, fond of reading and study, and eager to return to his rural home in France where he had left behind a wife and six children.

The French forces had elements of both strength and weakness. A large number of Indians were included, and though they were often a great help in a sudden attack, any protracted movement was distasteful to them, and it could never be foreseen when they would go off in a huff, or the various clans fall to fighting among themselves. Montcalm in telling how grotesquely they painted and dressed says: “You would take them for so many masqueraders or devils;” and he adds: “One needs the patience of an angel to get on with them.”

Another large portion of the army consisted of Canadians. As bush-fighters they were marvellously efficient, and they did well behind earthworks; but when it came to a battle in an open field, they were disorderly, and were apt to break and take to cover at the moment of crisis. But Montcalm had no intention of putting them to this test. It was his plan to avoid a pitched battle and to wear his antagonists out by making it impossible for them to get at him.

The English expedition was in charge of General James Wolfe. He was in his thirty-third year, a person of unbounded energy and courage and ability, but much handicapped by ill-health. His available force for land operations was less than nine thousand men. What chance had he against the much larger French army posted behind defensive works that were almost impregnable by nature?

On June twenty-sixth the English fleet arrived, and anchored off the south shore of the Island of Orleans, a few miles from Quebec. A flotilla of fireships had been prepared, which it was hoped would destroy the English vessels. These sailed down the river one dark night on their mission; but the nerve of those in charge failed them. They set fire to their ships a half hour too soon. The vessels were filled with pitch and tar and other combustibles, mixed with fireworks and bombs, and they carried various old cannon and muskets loaded to the throat. Some English sentries posted at the Point of Orleans were so amazed at the sudden eruption and the din of the explosions, and the flying missiles, that they lost their wits and fled. Gloomy volumes of smoke rolled upward, and the sheets of fire illumined the clouds and shed an infernal glare over the water and the shore and even the distant city. But the fireships did no harm except to burn alive one of their own captains and six or seven of his sailors.

Wolfe seized Point Levi opposite Quebec, threw up intrenchments, and soon was dropping bombs and balls into the town. In a single day eighteen houses and the cathedral were burned by exploding shells. But to lay Quebec in ruins was little gain if its defending army was undefeated. Only a few of the French were needed to protect the almost inaccessible heights that fronted the river from Quebec westward, and the army for the most part was posted along the Beauport waterside from the St. Charles to the Montmorency, a distance of seven or eight miles. They had thought it impossible for any hostile ship to pass the batteries of the city; but one night, with a favoring wind, several of the English vessels sailed to the upper river without suffering serious injury. Other ships and transports ran the gauntlet later, and a fleet of flat-boats followed.

The French were by this time on short rations, and the operations of the enemy above the town made them fearful that their supplies might be cut off. These came from the districts up the river, sometimes in boats at night, sometimes by land, and always with a good deal of hazard.

It became more and more difficult to maintain discipline among the troops, disorder and pillage were rife, and the Canadians deserted so fast that toward the end of August it is said that two hundred of them would sometimes go off in a

single night.

Wolfe continued to be haunted by illness, and at one time was wholly incapacitated for a week. His only fear was that he might not be able to lead his troops in person when he had perfected arrangements for a desperate attempt to dislodge the foe. He told his physician that he knew perfectly well he could not be cured, but begged that he might be put in shape to do his duty for a few days without pain.

While examining the river shore above the town he observed a path, about a mile from Cape Diamond, that ran with a long slope up the face of the brushy precipice, and he saw at the top a cluster of tents. These belonged to a guard of a hundred men stationed there to watch the Anse du Foulon, now called Wolfe's Cove. Here it was decided to attempt a landing. On September twelfth everything was ready. The main fleet in the Basin of Quebec ranged itself along the Beauport shore, and that night boats were lowered full of men while ship signalled to ship, cannon flashed and thundered, and shot ploughed the beach as if to clear a way for assailants to land. Montcalm thought an attack here was imminent, and he massed his troops to repel it.

The real danger was ten miles up the river. Thirty large bateaux besides smaller boats lay alongside the vessels there, and seventeen hundred men had made ready to embark in them. About two o'clock the tide began to ebb, and the boats cast off and floated away with the current. The stars were visible, but the night was moonless. General Wolfe was in one of the foremost boats. As they drifted along he repeated in a low voice to the officers about him Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard." "Gentlemen," said he in closing, "I would rather have written those lines than take Quebec."

When they neared their destination a sentry challenged them; but an officer who spoke French fluently responded and allayed the sentry's suspicions. The man on shore concluded the procession of boats was a convoy of provisions Montcalm's army expected down the river that night.



Cape Diamond [To List](#)

Just below the cove, the troops disembarked on a narrow strand at the foot of the steep heights. Near by was a rough ravine choked with forest trees, and in its depths ran a little brook, which, swollen by recent rains, could be heard splashing down its rocky course. As soon as the advance parties of English had scaled the heights they saw a cluster of tents at a short distance and immediately made a dash at them. The guard detailed for this place was largely made up of Canadians, and the commandant had allowed many of them to go home for a time to work at their harvesting. Nor was he keeping a strict watch with those he had left, and he himself had gone to bed. So there was little resistance. Some were captured and the rest ran away.

The loud huzzas of the victors announced to their waiting comrades below the result of the action. At once the entire body of troops began to scramble up the steep ascent, clutching at trees and bushes, their muskets slung at their backs. The narrow, slanting path on the face of the precipice had been made impassable by trenches and abattis; but all obstructions were soon cleared away. Meanwhile some of the boats had returned to the vessels for more men, and others had crossed the river to get troops that were waiting on the south shore.

When day broke, Wolfe had thirty-five hundred men drawn up along the crest of the heights. They were on the Plains of Abraham, so called from Abraham Martin, a St. Lawrence River pilot who had owned the land in early times. It was a rather monotonous grassy plateau with here and there a patch of corn and clumps of bushes, and it stretched without fence or inclosure up to the walls of the town.

Montcalm at Beauport had passed a sleepless night listening to the bellowing of the cannon of the fleet along his front and watching the boats that hovered off shore. Not until after six o'clock the next morning was he aware of how the English had outwitted him. In hot haste he rode to the city, and his army was ordered to follow. Wolfe was now in a position to cut off his supplies, and there was no choice but to fight. By ten o'clock Montcalm had mustered a force equal to that of the English. It formed in three bodies and made an impetuous charge, the men uttering loud shouts and firing as they advanced. When they were within forty paces there burst from the English line a crash of musketry. Another volley followed, and then a few moments of furious clattering fire. As soon as the smoke rose the ground was seen to be cumbered with dead and wounded, and the French paused, frantically shouting, cursing and gesticulating. The English were now ordered to charge, and with cheers and yells they dashed forward. Only at their right was there any serious resistance. This came from some sharpshooters concealed in the bushes and cornfields. Wolfe himself led the charge here. A shot shattered his wrist. He wrapped his handkerchief about it and kept on. Another shot struck him, but he still advanced, till a third bullet lodged in his breast. Then he staggered and sat down. Some of his men ran to his aid and carried him to the rear where they laid him on the ground. One of them looking back, exclaimed: "They run! See how they run!"

"Who run?" Wolfe demanded.

"The enemy, sir," was the reply. "They give away everywhere."

"Now God be praised. I will die in peace!" murmured Wolfe, and in a few moments his gallant soul had departed.

Montcalm, still on horseback, was borne along with the tide of fugitives toward the town. As he approached the walls a shot passed through his body. Two soldiers supported him, one on each side, and led his horse through the St. Louis Gate. He was carried into a house and a surgeon examined his wound and pronounced it mortal. Montcalm quietly asked how long he had to live.

"Probably not more than twelve hours," was the reply.

"So much the better," commented the dying general. "I am happy that I shall not live to see the surrender of Quebec."

He passed away peacefully late that night. In the confusion of the time no workman could be found to make a coffin, but an old servant of the Ursuline Convent nailed together a few boards to form a rough box. In it was laid the body of the dead soldier, and the evening of the same day he was carried to his rest. The officers of the garrison followed the bier and some of the populace, including women and children, joined the procession as it moved in dreary silence along the dusky street, shattered with cannonball and bomb. A shell bursting under the floor in the chapel of the Ursuline Convent had made a cavity which had been hollowed into a grave, and here by the light of torches was buried the heroic Montcalm.



Wolfe's Cove [To List](#)

The victors had fortified themselves on the battlefield. They were still greatly outnumbered by the French, and their victory was far from complete. But the enemy was so disconcerted by what had happened that the army was ordered to begin an immediate retreat. Quebec with its little garrison was abandoned to its fate. The cannon remained in the Beauport intrenchments, the tents were left standing, and the panic-stricken troops neither carried away nor destroyed the supplies of food in the storehouses. Utter confusion reigned in the fortress, and the militia refused to fight. The commandant put on a bold front for a few days, and when this would serve no longer he surrendered.

Late in October the English admiral fired a parting salute and sailed down the river carrying a portion of the troops and the embalmed body of General Wolfe. Ten battalions with artillery and a company of rangers remained to hold the ruins of Quebec. They repaired the defences and busied themselves in getting ready for winter. It was not easy to find comfortable quarters. In the lower town little was left save scorched and crumbling walls; and the upper town had also suffered much. Murray, the general in command, was a gallant soldier, upright, humane and daring. He issued strict orders against harming the Canadians in person or property, and he hanged a soldier who robbed a citizen. As a rule the soldiers themselves were as friendly to the conquered people as anyone could ask. During harvest they helped the French to reap their fields and shared with them their tobacco and rations.

Winter came with its fierce storms and cold. The supply of fuel constantly fell short, and the cutting of wood and getting it to the town was the chief task of the garrison. Parties of axemen, strongly guarded, were always at work in the forest of Sainte Foy, four or five miles distant, and thence the logs were dragged on sledges by the soldiers. Eight of them were harnessed in pairs to each sledge; and as there was danger from Indians and bush-rangers each man carried a musket slung on his back. The garrison was afflicted with scurvy and other diseases, and by spring scarcely more than half of them were fit for duty. About seven hundred had been temporarily buried in the snowdrifts. Toward the end of April a French expedition from Montreal eight or nine thousand strong drew near the town intent on its recapture. Murray went out to meet it. Snow still lingered nearly everywhere, sodden with rain, and turned to slush in the hollows. On the plateau near the Anse du Foulon the two armies encountered. At first the English gained some slight advantage, but at the end of a two hours' fight they had lost a thousand men and were driven back to the city. They were even obliged to leave behind some of their wounded, most of whom were scalped and mangled by the mission Indians. Now the fate of Quebec was again trembling in the balance, and the troops in the fortress, officers and men alike, labored with barrow, pick and spade to strengthen the defences. But on the ninth of May a British frigate arrived before the lower town and saluted the garrison. Such was the relief and joy of the troops that they mounted the parapet in the face of the enemy and huzzaed and

waved their hats for almost an hour, while the gunners made the country round reverberate with the discharge of their cannon. Other ships arrived a week later, and two of the English vessels passed the town to attack the French vessels in the river above. The latter were all captured or destroyed, and as these contained the army's stores of food and ammunition, the besieging forces were obliged to withdraw.

Quebec's next taste of war came in the American Revolution. The rebelling colonies, early in the contest, aspired to the conquest of Canada, and in August, 1775, an expedition was started down Lake Champlain under the command of Richard Montgomery. On the twelfth of November he was in possession of Montreal and there issued a proclamation urging the Canadians to join hands with the colonies in the war.



*Overlooking the St. Lawrence from the Plains of
Abraham* [To List](#)

Meanwhile Benedict Arnold with over a thousand men was making his way through the forests of Maine toward Quebec. He and his followers went in boats up the Kennebec. In order to reach the Chaudière which flows into the St. Lawrence they had to carry boats, oars and baggage on their shoulders a long distance through the tangled undergrowth of the primeval woods. Before the end of the portage their shoes were worn out, their clothes in tatters and their food gone. Some small game was shot and they devoured their dogs. When they reached the Chaudière, after a terrible march of thirty-three days, many of their number had succumbed to starvation, cold and fatigue, while two hundred more had turned back carrying with them the sick and disabled. The descent of the Chaudière afforded some respite, and they presently began to find cattle for food.

They arrived at the mouth of the river a little above Quebec, about the middle of November, crossed the broad St. Lawrence and climbed to the Plains of Abraham by the same ravine that Wolfe had climbed to victory. The little, worn-out army, now reduced to seven hundred men, summoned the garrison of the town to surrender, or come out and fight; but the garrison would do neither. So Arnold waited for Montgomery to come from Montreal. He arrived about three weeks later and it was agreed to attack the defences. On the last day of the year at two o'clock in the morning, in a blinding snowstorm, Montgomery and Arnold each began a furious attack on opposite sides of the town. Their assault was a surprise; but Montgomery in the narrow pass at the base of Cape Diamond, fighting his way into the Lower Town, fell dead, pierced by three bullets; and his men, confused by this mishap, hesitated until the enemy was reinforced and drove them back. Arnold was almost equally unfortunate. He was severely wounded and carried from the field; and though some of his men fought their way far into the town this gallant invading party was finally surrounded and captured.

Arnold with the rest of the troops remained in the neighborhood of the city until spring when he was reinforced and renewed the struggle. But assistance had arrived also for the English, so the Americans were compelled to fall back. Montreal was retaken, and the remnant of the invading army, after a hazardous retreat, reached Crown Point.

The defeat of Montgomery and Arnold was celebrated in Quebec on the anniversary of the fight for twenty-five years afterward by banquettings, dances, military reviews and religious services. An officer present at the thanksgiving ceremonies conducted by the bishop in the cathedral on the first anniversary records that: "Eight unfortunate Canadians who had sided with the rebels were present with ropes about their necks, and were forced to do penance before all in

the church, and crave pardon of their God, Church and King.”

THE QUEBEC OF THE PRESENT

Quebec is the quaintest of all American cities. It is superbly situated on the end of a high, narrow ridge that rises between the St. Lawrence and the river St. Charles, which flows into the greater stream a little to the east of the bluff. The boldness of its site, its romantic history, and its Old World appearance combine to give it a very exceptional charm. A walled fortification with gates surrounds its more ancient portion, and this part of the town with its narrow thoroughfares and frowning battlements is like a fragment of medieval Europe, pervaded by the atmosphere of departed centuries.

The magnificence of the town's position with the noble river flowing at its base cannot help impressing all beholders. Especially noteworthy in the landscape are the long dark lines of the world-famed citadel at the summit of the cliff. You can travel a score of miles up or down the St. Lawrence, or ramble nearly as far amid the hills on either side, and a chance look backward still reveals the fortifications looming against the sky.

I arrived at Quebec in the evening. The railway station was behind the cliff away from the river, and when I presently started out to explore I at once began climbing. How steep the streets were, and how crooked! The chimes were ringing in one of the big churches as I wended through the irregular ways, and I felt as if I was in London or Edinburgh. I kept on mounting higher and higher till at last I came to a vast gloomy height crowned by masses of stonework that I recognized as military buildings and fortifications. Then I turned aside and went down to a less ambitious elevation and at length found myself on Dufferin Terrace, overlooking the old town at the foot of the cliff and the dark river beyond.

I was delighted with Quebec that night, and I was no less pleased with it by daylight. How strange that there should be such a place in the midst of our American landscape! The air and sky, and the appearance of the trees and the country roundabout were familiar enough; but the buildings and the streets and the language were foreign. As a matter of fact nine tenths of the people are French and Roman Catholics, and many of the humbler class can neither speak nor understand English.

A favorite method of seeing the city is to drive about in a *calèche*—a crazy-looking two-wheeled vehicle, but with an antique individuality that makes it popular with tourists. Indeed, it is only their patronage that keeps it from becoming obsolete. The wheels are very large and heavy, and the body, which is suspended between them on broad leather straps, has a peculiar but gentle motion. Under the hood of the *calèche* is a seat with room for two persons, and in front is the narrow seat of the driver. It is certainly a somewhat awkward contrivance, and one citizen remarked to me that the man who invented it ought to have been hung; yet it lifts you above the height of ordinary carriages, and this at least is an advantage for sightseeing.

The portion of the city that skirts the base of the cliff is known as the Lower Town, while that on the height is called the Upper Town. Narrow as is the space where the ancient Lower Town stands between the beetling crag and the St. Lawrence, it was formerly much narrower; for a considerable portion of its present width has been reclaimed from the river. To the westward it soon becomes more attenuated, and there is room for only a single street that skirts around the foot of Cape Diamond, hugging the cliff as if for safety.

Cape Diamond, whose precipitous uplift is crowned with the citadel, takes its name from the numerous sparkling quartz crystals found embedded in its rock. This massive, defiant, outjutting crag could not fail to greatly impress the early explorers. “Que bec!” (What a beak) one of Cartier's followers is said to have exclaimed as the first expedition up the river approached the cliff; and thus, according to this tradition, was the height and the future city named.

Some students, however, think the name was derived from an Indian word meaning “the narrows”—a reference to the river, which is here contracted to much less than its usual width. The cliff had a wilderness setting then, where now we see clustering roofs, ramparts, fortified walls, pointed spires and ominous muzzles of cannon. But the face of the rock, with its rugged grimness somewhat softened by scattered shrubbery, presented much the same appearance it does today.

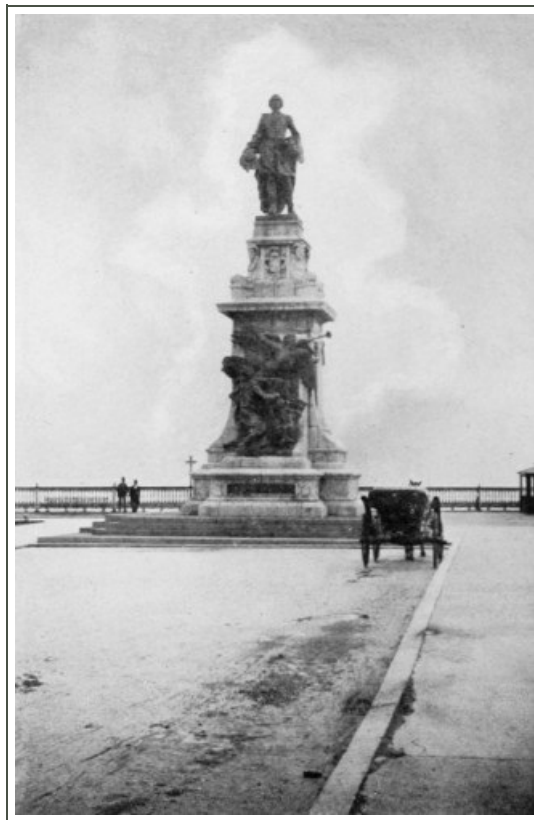
In the heart of the Lower Town is the Champlain Market Hall, a big gray stone building fronting an open square

where the wives of the French Canadian farmers gather with their wares on market days. There they sit or stand, selling the produce of their gardens and dairies, which they have brought in the boxes and bags by which they are surrounded. A fleet of small steamers lying five or six abreast at the market wharf has served the country women and their produce as a conveyance from their riverside homes.

While I stood watching the scene one day my attention was attracted by a woman who went from one display of produce to another critically examining what was shown and haggling for lower prices. A townsman standing near me was observing her also, and he said: "They will not make much out of her. She is a Jewess. Many Jews have come to Quebec in recent years, and they are getting to control more and more of the business. A man will reach here in rags, but pretty soon he will have a little stock of things to sell which he carries around in handbags from door to door. In five years you will find he has a shop in the town."

Just as he finished this explanation a man came along in a great hurry and asked the way to the wharf of a certain steamboat line. My companion replied, and the man bustled away. "That was a blasted Englishman," said my acquaintance. "I have to be around the wharves a good deal of the time, and strangers are forever asking me questions. Some of the questions are downright foolish. Why, the other day a fellow asked me if I spoke United States. 'What the dickens kind of a language is that?' I said."

Of all the many narrow streets of old Quebec the queerest is *Sous le Cap*. It skirts the easterly base of the cliff, winding about the irregularities and having some added angles of its own. So narrow is it that in most parts two carts could not pass each other. Clotheslines extend across overhead, and it is spanned by many closed-in passages that reach from one upper story to that opposite, and dark little alleys connect it with the next street below. As a final touch the children of the street follow the stranger begging for pennies.



The Champlain Monument [To List](#)

The only roadway leading to the Upper Town, unless you go a considerable distance back from the St. Lawrence, is *Côte de la Montagne* or Mountain Street, and this has not been passable for carriages until comparatively recent years. It is a stiff climb up its winding way, but this is easier than to go up by the still steeper stairways. The most notable of the latter form of thoroughfare is what is known as the Breakneck Stairs close by the Dufferin Terrace. This has one hundred and sixty-four steps. The flight of stairs is fairly wide and is divided by a number of iron railings for hand supports. These railings also serve as a means of descent for the boys, who sit on them sideways and go down with astonishing velocity. Such use has given the iron a polished smoothness that is quite noticeable.

A short walk from the upper end of the stairs brings one to Dufferin Terrace, Quebec's famous promenade. This is half way up the northern slope of the bluff, nearly two hundred feet above the river which it fronts. It is a planked platform about a quarter of a mile long, and the roofs and wharves of the old town under the cliff are immediately below.

A disastrous landslide occurred from the face of the rock that supports its southern end in 1889. There had been a good deal of rainy weather, and the water evidently worked its way deep into a fault in the rock. Thus a great mass was loosened, and between eight and nine o'clock one September evening it slid down and crashed into a line of tenement houses on the other side of the road at the foot of the cliff. Most of the inmates were hurled into eternity without a moment's notice. The rocks and earth have never been entirely cleared away, and the road here is several feet higher than its natural level. Some of the adjoining homes still stand partially wrecked and the rocks that collided with their walls lie just where they stopped. A portion of the masonry of the fortress came down in the slide. The break has been mended, but there is some fear that the adjacent end of Dufferin Terrace may slough off, and the public is barred from venturing on the doubtful portion.

Back of the Terrace, in the governor's garden, is a twin-faced monument in honor of the illustrious contending generals, Wolfe and Montcalm, who both won immortal fame and met death at nearly the same time. The monument is said to be "strictly classical" in all its proportions, and therefore, I suppose, ought to be admired as a thing of beauty; but, be that as it may, it is certainly noteworthy from the unusual fact of its being erected to honor both the victor and the vanquished.

Not far distant from this spot is the post-office, a massive stone building that has above its entrance the rudely carved gilded image of a dog gnawing a bone. You wonder what can be the significance of this curious tablet. According to a long-cherished tradition, Philibert, the proprietor of the old house that formerly stood on this site had some quarrel with an officer named Legardeur, and placed the tablet in the front wall of his dwelling accompanied by four menacing lines which may be translated thus:

I am a dog gnawing a bone.
While I gnaw I take my repose.
The time will come, though not yet,
When I will bite him who bites me.

Some declare that Philibert was assassinated by Legardeur, and that Philibert's brother pursued the assassin to Europe, and later to the East Indies where he slew him.

On the upland are many notable buildings, among which should be mentioned the Archbishop's Palace and the Basilica. The latter is the city's largest church. It may be said to have been begun in 1645 when the governor and the inhabitants of the city appropriated twelve hundred and fifty beaver skins toward the cost of its construction. The building was ready for partial use five years later, but was not definitely opened until 1657. Since then it has never closed its doors except for the making of repairs after the siege of 1759. It suffered much in the several wars, but the foundations and parts of the walls are the same as at first. The rarest pictures in the city hang in the Basilica, and include various canvases from some of Europe's most famous masters. In the Seminary Chapel adjoining the Basilica are a number of supposed relics of Christ—portions of the cross, and of the crown of thorns and seamless robe.

Both the Basilica and the Chapel face on the old marketplace, where, in by-gone times the rustic housewives used to sit in their carts or sleighs on market days peddling out their farm produce to the townspeople. What varied scenes this old square has witnessed—tragic, gay, martial and religious! Here formerly stood the pillory used for the punishment of thieves and perjurers; and many a victim did penance in it.

The older part of the city on the height is still a walled town. Under French dominion five gates pierced the fortifications, and the English added two more; but these have all been removed, and the two modern substitutes appear altogether too trim and youthful to have any sentiment about them.



Sous le Cap Street [To List](#)

A short walk west of the St. Louis Gate is a height of land, now known as Perreault's Hill, which up to the end of the eighteenth century was the general place of execution in Quebec. One romantic story connected with it relates how a certain French soldier here cheated the gallows, shortly before the British conquest. The crime for which he had been condemned was the murder of a comrade who had been known in Quebec as a very bad character. The previous good conduct of the murderer and the circumstances that led to his deed won him the sympathy of the community, and a number of his friends, including his Father Confessor, plotted to save his life. On the way to the place of execution this priest exhibited a tender affection for the condemned man, embracing him warmly, with his arms about the criminal's neck. In one hand, however, he had a small bottle of nitric acid with which he carefully soaked the cord that had been put in position ready to serve as the instrument of the prisoner's death. They arrived at the gallows and the fateful moment came when the murderer was to drop to his death. But the corroded rope gave way, and the man's friends who had crowded around the scaffold quickly opened a passage for his escape. As soon as he had run through they promptly closed up their ranks to prevent the soldiers from following him. The ruse was successful; for the fugitive, after hiding a few days in a cooper's shop of the Lower Town, made good his escape to France, the cooper having put him on board a departing vessel in a barrel.

Quebec's important place in history has rested primarily on the fact that here was one of the most impregnable positions of defence in the world. Of all the strongholds in British territory this is only excelled by Gibraltar. The citadel, which faces the St. Lawrence on the highest part of the bluff, three hundred and forty feet above the river, covers an enclosed area of forty acres and was built from plans approved by the Duke of Wellington. The main approach to it is up the steep hill from the St. Louis Gate through a labyrinth of high walls and earthworks that are loopholed for musketry, and pierced with openings where gleam the mouths of cannon.

When the French erected their wooden fortifications on the height, so much money disappeared in the process, not a little of it absorbed by graft, that Louis XIV is reported to have asked whether the defences of Quebec were built of gold. The present citadel dates back to 1823, at which time the sum of twenty-five million dollars was expended on it. Its construction is very massive, and many of the buildings are considered bomb-proof. Underground passages are alleged to communicate with certain localities outside of the fortress, but knowledge of these is not for general diffusion.

Visitors are halted beneath the arch of the entrance by an armed guard, and a soldier is detailed to show them around. The outer buildings are half buried in the earth, and the green turf overgrows the roofs. It seemed as if a foe would have small chance of seriously damaging them, and the entire aspect of the place is satisfactorily grim and stout. Of especial

interest to visitors from the States is a little bronze cannon captured at Bunker Hill. “You’ve got the cannon, but we’ve got the hill,” remarked one Yankee to his guide.

“Yes,” responded the guide, “but if the hill had been on wheels as the cannon was, we’d have carried that off too.”

The garrison is Canadian and numbers three hundred and sixty-five, a man for every day in the year apparently, and I suppose an extra one is added on leap years. They are not called on to do much strenuous work, and are free to use their time as they please a considerable portion of each day. There is no anxiety on their part as to where their food and clothes are to come from, and the worst evil that is likely to befall a man is a temporary lodgment behind the bars of the citadel jail for drunkenness.

From an angle of the outer ramparts known as the King’s Bastion one gets the most imposing view of the river that Quebec affords. The downlook from amid the cannon onto the town and the great river and the broad landscape beyond is truly magnificent.



Quebec—A Calèche [To List](#)

At the foot of the lofty cliff a narrow road winds along westward in and out of the irregularities with an almost continuous line of quaint old houses on either side. The dwellings are apt to be decrepit and shabby, yet they are nearly all occupied. Ancient rotting wharves reach out into the river, and both these and the buildings are suggestive of a prosperous and lively past. This road furnishes one of the most picturesque rides or walks in the Quebec vicinity, and at the end of about a mile it takes you to Wolfe’s Cove. By then the houses have ceased, and here is a slight inreach of the river, and a heavily wooded glen makes a break in the giant wall of the bluff. It is a steep, hard climb to the upland, even with the carefully graded road to make the way easier. At the top you come forth on the Plains of Abraham, now mostly laid out in streets, and having numerous trees and many suburban homes to intercept the view. Half way back to the town is a monument marking the spot where “Wolfe died victorious.” This is on the verge of a public park—a large dreary common which has much the character of the original Plains as they were when the battle was fought. From there you can look off on the dreamy river with its bordering towns and boats coming and going; and on its far side, somewhat up the stream, you can see the ruins of the monster Quebec Railway Bridge.

This was to span the St. Lawrence at a height of one hundred and fifty feet above the water. Toward the end of August, 1907, a long arm of it reaching out from the south shore went down. Signs of weakness had been observed some time previous, and many of the workmen had refused to go out on it. The catastrophe occurred within a few minutes of

five o'clock, at which hour work would have ceased for the day. The noise of the fall was like thunder and was heard for miles. Over seventy men were hurled to death, and only two of those who went down survived. Those who perished were mostly from the States and were reputed to be the finest workmen in the world, whose places could not be filled. "I didn't care a hang about the bridge," one of my informants remarked—"that could have gone and welcome if it hadn't carried the men to destruction, too."

One of the historic suburbs of Quebec is Cap Rouge, about ten miles west. I went thither by a stage that left the post-office late one summer afternoon. The vehicle was a rude sort of an omnibus with a long seat extending lengthwise on either side. Both seats were filled with women passengers who carried numerous baskets and bundles and I sat in front with the driver amid a heap of mailbags. The load was a heavy one for the two horses, and the driver kept uneasily urging them forward, jerking his reins, chirruping or speaking to them, and now and then mildly flicking them with his whip. We paused at intervals to let off or take on passengers, deliver mail, and once to pay at a toll gate. The road was hard and well-graded, and it was pleasantly lined by trees and shrubbery. All the way we were on the upland until we approached Cap Rouge, which is a little place in a glen that opens out on the St. Lawrence. Here we made a steep descent of a long hill, and midway a polestrap broke and let the heavy wagon run onto the heels of the horses. There was panic among the women passengers, and though the driver quickly brought his vehicle to a stop by applying the brake, they all piled out at the rear and walked the rest of the way. Cap Rouge proved to be a delightful little nook, as secluded and peaceful as one could wish; but a good deal marred by a gigantic railroad trestle that strides across the valley.

On the beach at St. Augustin, a few miles farther up the river is a deserted church, built in 1648, that the devil in the shape of a horse is said to have assisted in constructing. This horse was employed in carting immense stones that were beyond the power of an ordinary horse to move. Those in charge of it were careful never to take off its bridle, as it was understood that in the bridle was the magic power which kept the horse to its task. At last, however, a workman who was watering the horse thoughtlessly removed the bridle to allow the creature to drink better. Immediately the beast disappeared in a cloud of burning sulphur.

Nowhere in the St. Lawrence Valley is there a region so rich in legend as this in the neighborhood of Quebec, and not a little of its charm is due to these quaint stories that have come down from the shadowy past.

XI

FROM CAPE DIAMOND TO THE GULF

Just below Quebec is the great Isle of Orleans, originally christened by Cartier the "Isle of Bacchus" on account of the great profusion of vines and grapes there. It was also for a long time commonly known as "Wizards' Isle," in the belief that the Indians who inhabited it were in such close touch with nature they could predict with certainty the coming of a storm or a high tide. Some persons claimed that at night phantom lights played over the island shores and near waters. The white inhabitants were much alarmed by this report until it was found that the "spirit lights" were torches in the hands of dusky fishermen. Uncanny stories long continued to be told, but now the peaceful and attractive isle with its villages and farms is quite free from all suggestion of supernatural visitants.

On the mainland opposite the west end of the island are the far-famed Falls of Montmorency. They are in plain sight from the St. Lawrence, set back in a rounded niche of the high northern shore. The Falls are nearly a hundred feet higher than those of Niagara, but the less emphasis the visitor puts on this fact the better; for the tendency is not to think of the actual beauty of the Falls, but to compare them disparagingly with the tremendous volume of Niagara and doubt if they are really as high as is claimed. One does not get near enough below to correctly take in the immensity of the leap made by the stream, which for the whole two hundred and fifty feet of its perpendicular fall is broken into white and fleecy foam on the face of the rock. Then it spreads itself in broad thin sheets over a floor of stones and gravel, and slips tamely away to the St. Lawrence.

There was formerly a suspension bridge over the river at the very brink of the Falls; but some fifty or more years ago it broke away from its moorings and was swept over the cataract, carrying with it an unfortunate farmer and his family who were driving across. The bodies were never recovered, for all objects passing over the Falls disappear in a subterranean cavity worn by the constant pounding of the water. The stone piers of the bridge still remain.

By no means all the flow of the river is allowed to go over the wild, wooded cliff simply to furnish a spectacle for sightseers. There is a dam at the crest and enough of the water is deflected to furnish power for lighting the city of Quebec.

An electric railway makes the Falls easily accessible, and it continues many miles farther down the shore. The outlook from the car windows gives an excellent opportunity for observing to advantage the farms characteristic of the St. Lawrence waterside. These were originally of considerable breadth, but large families necessitated subdivision when the land was handed down from generation to generation, and as every proprietor desired a frontage on the river, the strips have become marvellously narrow.

On these farms can be seen the typical Canadian country dwelling. It is a low modest structure with a roof that ends at the eaves in a sudden outward curve, like that of a Chinese pagoda. Such roofs are not, however, confined to the country, for costly brick or stone houses in the towns often have the same peculiarity. One cannot help fancying that the reason of it may be in the climate and that the curve was originated to shoot the sliding snow farther away from the dwelling. The projection is an efficient protection to doors and windows without interfering seriously with the light, and in many cases it covers a veranda.

Twenty miles from Quebec on this north shore we arrive at St. Anne de Beaupré where over one hundred and fifty thousand pilgrims resort annually to pay their devotions at this shrine of world-wide fame. The shrine is the chief support of the railway, which has been solemnly consecrated and blessed by the cardinal, as have even the cars in which the pilgrims travel.

The village is rather a garish looking place with its big church and its chapels and other buildings of a religious nature, its huddle of hotels and souvenir shops. It has a striking setting in the landscape; for immediately behind is an abrupt and lofty hill, and to the east is a succession of wild mountain promontories reaching out into the river. But the river shore opposite the town is a gently inclined beach, reed-grown in its higher portion, and muddy and stone-strewn where the tide exposes it beyond.



Saint Anne de Beaupré [To List](#)

St. Anne, in whose honor the great church just back from the waterside was built, was the mother of the Virgin Mary. When she died she was buried in Jerusalem. Later the infidels overran the Holy Land pillaging and destroying, and they dragged the coffin of St. Anne forth from its tomb, but could neither open nor burn it. So they threw it into the sea, and it floated away to the town of Apt in France on the shore of the Mediterranean. There it lay for a long time buried in the sand. One day some fishermen of Apt caught in their net an enormous fish. They dragged it to the land, and before they succeeded in killing it, the fish in its struggling made a deep hole in the sand and laid bare the coffin of St. Anne. The fishermen tried to open the coffin, but did not succeed any better than had the infidels in the Holy Land. They informed the bishop, Aurelius, of this strange phenomenon, and he had the coffin walled into a crypt of the church. In the course of time St. Anne became the patroness of Brittany, and presently it began to be rumored that at Auray where a shrine had been dedicated to her she performed miraculous cures for those who trusted her.

A few years after the founding of Quebec a crew of Briton sailors, voyaging to the new world, were buffeted by a terrible tempest and vowed they would build a shrine in honor of St. Anne, if she guided them safely through the storm. They survived the gale, and when they landed on the shore of the St. Lawrence at the spot where now stands the beautiful Basilica they erected a little wooden chapel in fulfillment of their promise. At the time this primitive edifice was rebuilt in 1660, one of the villagers of Beaupré who desired to help in the work was a man suffering much bodily pain. He thought he would have the strength to show his devotion by laying three stones of the foundation, but dared hope for nothing more. While he was engaged in the task, however, the pain suddenly left him. His cure was attributed to St. Anne, and a woman who had been bent double by some affliction for eight months began to invoke the saint as soon as she heard of the miracle, and was instantly as well able to stand on her feet and move her limbs as she had ever been.

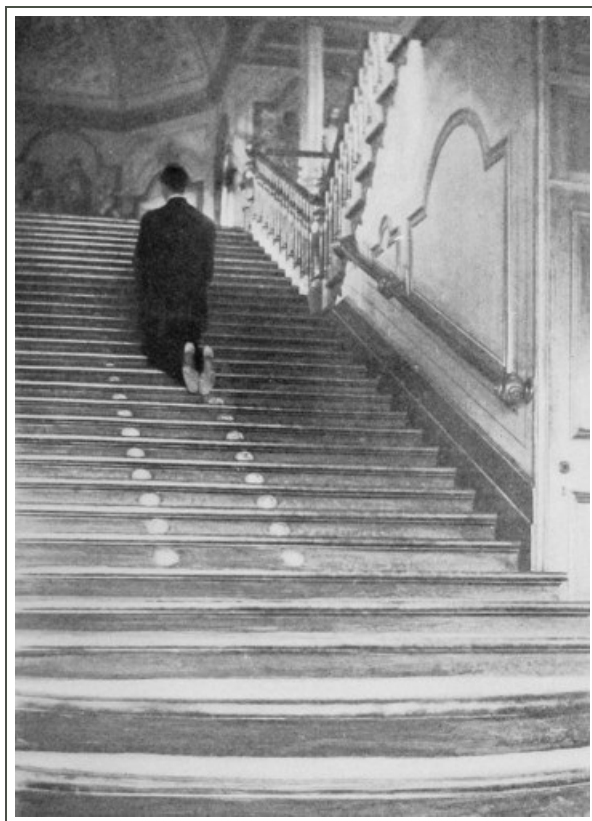
Miracle after miracle followed until the rude little hamlet was the talk of all New France. Pilgrims in great numbers began to resort to St. Anne de Beaupré, and many journeyed thither even in winter, travelling on the frozen river in their sleighs. Before the great annual feast day of the saint the Micmac Indians who came regularly from New Brunswick to trade, would be seen in their canoes paddling up stream to the shrine, where they built birch bark huts to shelter the pilgrims. The peculiar fame of the place appealed especially to the sea-faring folk, and it was a regular custom of vessels ascending the St. Lawrence to fire a broadside salute when passing.

One legend of the place is that the English troops in waging war against the French once took possession of the village and burned all of it except the church. Three times they set fire to the building, but their efforts did not avail against the protecting spirit of good St. Anne.

To the Canadian peasantry St. Anne de Beaupré became and still is as sacred as was Jerusalem to the Jews, and they resort to the shrine to be cured of all the various ills to which the flesh is heir. They believe that miracles are wrought here just as in Bible times. The blind are made to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk with ease, and strength and vigor are restored to those nigh to death. All this is done through the intercession of the good St. Anne, one of whose finger bones in a glass case is shown and venerated at the Basilica. There is also shown, among other treasures, a piece of rock from the grotto in which the virgin Mary was born.

The sanctity of devotion and the marvels of the miraculous permeate the whole atmosphere of St. Anne de Beaupré. But while many of the visitors have come to get nearer the Deity, who they think works miracles here which neither prayers nor piety would elicit elsewhere, others come to contemplate what seems to them merely a strange manifestation of human nature with possibly some occult significance which they cannot fathom. But whatever it is that brought them, the character of the place is calculated to stir the emotions and make the fervor of the devout more fervent and subdue the critical.

In front of the church is a wide yard with lawn and shrubbery at the far side, but the nearer half is an expanse of pebbles that shift disagreeably under the feet. The church interior is rich in color, and its dim light, its kneeling worshippers and wandering sightseers, and its shaven monks with their brown robes and sandaled feet combine to make a strange picture. The visitors are of many nationalities, and for their edification the priests in charge of the church deliver sermons in German, Italian, Dutch and Spanish as well as in English and French.



The sacred stairway [To List](#)

Even unbelievers cannot but be impressed by the crowded array of crutches, splints and other supports of a crippled body piled up eleven tiers high about the pillars at the rear of the great church—all left by their former owners whose infirmities were here cured. Amongst the various articles in this collection I noticed a bottle of nerve tonic, and there were several shoes with thick soles to make up for the deficiency in the length of a leg. Could it be possible that St. Anne had made the shrunken limb perfect? Those whose sight had been rejuvenated had left behind their glasses in great numbers; but there were blind beggars on the pebbles outside rattling a few coins in their tin cups to attract the attention of visitors to their pitiable condition—could not St. Anne heal them, or was their occupation so profitable they did not wish to be healed? One wall case in the church was filled with a decorative arrangement of pipes and snuff boxes left by tobacco users, who had determined under the inspiration of the place to be clean in this respect also.

The most interesting of the neighboring chapels is that of the Scala Sancta or Holy Stairs, a short distance up the hill. All the space in front is very thriftily cultivated, and at the time of my visit was full of onions, cabbages, carrots and other vegetables growing in neat rows. The stairs are a facsimile in wood of the famous twenty-eight steps of white marble at Rome, brought from Jerusalem in the fourth century and placed in the palace of the Sovereign Pontiff. At Jerusalem they are supposed to have formed the staircase leading to the Pretorium, and therefore have been trodden six times by the footsteps of Christ. As at Rome, so at La Bonne Sainte Anne, these stairs are deeply venerated by all pilgrims. Each step contains a relic of the Holy Land, and the devout ascend them on their knees, the only way allowed, pausing on each to pray or meditate on the Passion of the Savior. From the top of the stairs descent is made by a flight of

steps on either side to the level of the entrance.

The scenery of the north shore of the St. Lawrence beyond Beaupré is very inspiring all the way to the Saguenay, and the land to the south is so dim and distant that the voyage along this rugged shore is much like skirting a sea coast. The constant succession of big, rude heights rarely affords any encouragement to human habitations. Yet here and there a small hamlet has established itself in a glen or clings at the foot of a precipitous bluff. It would seem as if the rocky ramparts along this shore could hardly have presented a wilder aspect to the early explorers, and the river itself is even now much of the time just as lonely as it was then, for often not a sail or a steam vessel is in sight.

About thirty miles below Quebec is a little group of islands in mid-river, the largest of which is known as Crane's Island. On the highest point of this island there was formerly a fine chateau. Its builder was a gay courtier in the social circles of France in early manhood. He married a lady of great beauty, but of a temperament that demanded immediate compliance with her slightest wishes, and she and her husband were far from being happy. One day she upbraided him for being too attentive to his acquaintances among the court beauties, and he proposed that they should put themselves beyond the power of arousing each other's jealous criticism in future by going to New France and building a home in some secluded spot beside the St. Lawrence.

This wilderness exclusiveness suited the fancy of the lady, and they journeyed across the Atlantic. They selected Crane's Island for their dwelling-place, and soon the feathered denizens which had there held their right of domain for ages were frightened to other haunts by the hammer of civilization erecting the new house.



The Isle of Hazels as seen from Les Eboulements [To List](#)

At length Chateau Le Grande, as the owner called it, was ready for occupancy, and in this lonely retreat Monsieur and his wife at first lived very happily; for they both loved nature and found much to enjoy in their picturesque surroundings. The years passed on serenely until Madame became aware that her husband was often absent from home, and though he made liberal and plausible excuses she was not satisfied. It was his habit in these absences to go away across the river in a boat. One day when he had gone off thus Madame determined to follow him. As the sun was sinking behind the purple mountains on the western horizon she rowed across to the opposite shore. She had been told that the Indians were having a dance a few miles above, and thought she would find her truant husband among them. Sure enough, she presently came to a village in a forest glade where in the firelight the wild pantomimic dance was in progress, and in the midst of the dancers was her husband with a dusky Indian belle for his partner. Madame glided forward and confronted him. Over her shapely shoulders she wore a thick dark cloak, and the Indians fled at sight of her tall supernatural figure, thinking she was some evil spirit. Monsieur alone remained, and at a motion from his wife he followed her in crestfallen silence as she strode away into the darkness toward the river. They returned to their chateau. There she faced him imperiously and said, "When you brought me here from our old home across the ocean you made a vow to grant me any demand I might make, if you proved recreant to your pledge of fidelity. Are you ready to fulfil your promise?"

"Name it," said he.

"You are never to leave this island again as long as you live," she responded.

He accepted the verdict with bowed head, and afterward kept to the chateau and its immediate neighborhood. But the place had lost its former cheerfulness, and instead of gaiety there was soberness and melancholy. Finally Monsieur died and his lady sailed away to France, and left the chateau to crumble into ruin.

Another island having more than ordinary interest is the Isle aux Coudres, so named by Cartier from the abundance of hazel trees growing there at the time of his voyage. When he arrived at the Isle he found the natives busy catching white whales. In later years the French took up this industry. The method employed was very simple. Saplings long enough to reach above high water were driven in a row into the shelving beach where they would be left out of water at low tide, each end of the row stopping with a half circle curve inward. The whales coming with the tide in pursuit of shoals of smelts and herrings that keep close to the shore, unwittingly swam into the trap set for them. When they sought to return they found themselves confronted by this curved line of poles. In their efforts to escape they became more and more frightened. At the end of the swaying barrier the twist turned them back on their course, and they continued in a frenzy, swimming up and down till the ebbing tide left them high and dry, easy victims to the assaults of the fishermen. As many as three hundred have been captured at the incoming of a single tide. The whales attain a length of fifteen or twenty feet, and when it is recalled that each yields an average of about seventy gallons of oil worth a dollar a gallon, and that the skin is very valuable for leather, the lucrativeness of the employment is evident, provided the whales are reasonably plentiful.

One of the pleasures of voyaging on the river here is to watch the porpoise-like gambols of these whales, and it is of interest to know that the waters also abound in halibut, sturgeon, salmon and smaller fish.

A neighboring indentation of the north shore is the Bay St. Paul. This Bay is said to have been the center of a fierce elemental war in 1663. For six months earthquakes were felt throughout Canada. Along the St. Lawrence meteors filled the air, which was dark with smoke and cinders, the grass withered, and the crops would not grow. New lakes were formed, the contour of the country was changed, and a hill slid down into the river and formed an island.

Another story of the instability of the earth in this region has to do with the village of Les Eboulements. This used to stand by the shore of the Bay, but the river made such encroachments that about 1830 it was removed to its present picturesque but exposed position on the shoulder of a great ridge a thousand feet above the water. This removal and the region's early earthquake experience have given rise to the romantic legend that the old village was engulfed by the St. Lawrence, and that its houses and church can sometimes be seen in the river depths when the water is clear and unruffled.

Somewhat farther down the river is that popular resort for tourists, Murray Bay, the Newport of the St. Lawrence. On the east side of the Bay rises the lofty Cap aux Corbeaux, a name given to the peak by the early explorers because of the crows that hovered around its jagged cliffs. Great numbers of these birds continue even to this day to build their nests among the inaccessible crags, and the caribou browses on the wild slopes, and the bears fatten on the berries of the dwarfed bushes clinging in the rocky crevices.

The country folk affirm that the mountain is the abode of demons, and that in the days of old a giant held sway there. But the cross of Christ brought by white men drove this barbaric monster to take refuge in the solitudes of Labrador. He is still angry at having been forced from a throne he had held so long, and he frequently stamps his great feet wrathfully, and gives voice to threatening thunder tones, shaking the entire north shore with terrifying violence. Thus is explained the occasional earthquake shocks to which the region is subject.

The scenery in and about Murray Bay is exceptionally wild and fine, the air is bracing and the fishing excellent. In the village can be had all the comforts of civilization; yet a few miles back from the river the country is an almost unexplored wilderness of rugged hill and forest—a hunter's paradise.

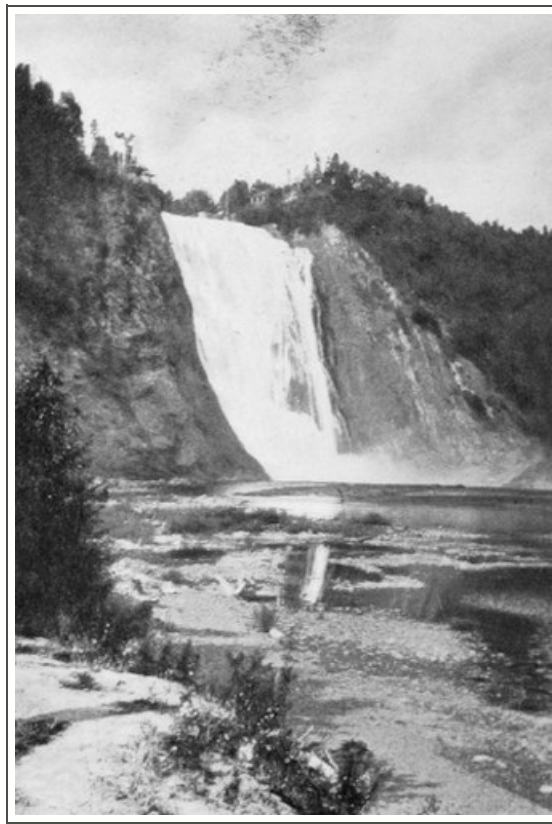
The next place of importance is Tadousac at the mouth of the Saguenay. Below there no one goes on the north shore unless he is a salmon fisher, and the interior of the bordering country retains in the main its aboriginal savagery. The south shore has inhabitants, but makes no very strong appeal in a scenic way until the gulf is reached. Here, at the end of the Gaspé Peninsula, is Gaspé Bay, twenty miles in length and ending in a basin large enough to shelter a thousand vessels. The Bay was early known to the French fishermen and explorers, and in 1534 Cartier had erected a cross on the shore thirty feet high, decked it with his country's flag and proclaimed the region around to be a possession of the King of

France.

A little farther south, rising from the water just off a projection of the coast is Percé Rock, five hundred feet in length and about three hundred high. The top is nearly flat, and on all sides the cliffs descend perpendicularly to the sea. In spite of its massive proportions the pounding waves have sculptured an arch through the rock near the outer end, and this is what gives it its name. The strange and lonely rock is one to stir the fancy and it is no wonder that romantic and supernatural tales are told of the vicinity. One of these stories is of a maid of Brittany whose lover was among the earliest voyagers to come and seek his fortune in the wilderness valley of the St. Lawrence. The maiden would have accompanied him on his hazardous journey, but he thought it best she should remain behind till he sent for her. Soon after reaching Quebec he arranged for her coming, and wrote to have her cross the ocean to him on the next ship. She hastened to comply, but the vessel on which she sailed was captured by a Spanish corsair. She alone of all those on board was spared. Her beauty had so appealed to the pirate captain that he announced his intention to make her his wife. But she repelled his advances, and neither entreaty nor threat could move her. Finally, in revenge for her persistent refusal, he swore that she should never join her lover in Quebec, but that he would sail up the river past the town on the crag, and in sight of its inhabitants she should be put to death.

This impending fate so preyed on her mind that when the vessel approached the mouth of the great river she eluded her watchers and sprang overboard. The efforts made to rescue her were in vain and the ship went on; but shortly afterward the lookout saw on ahead the form of a woman gliding along over the waves, her clinging garments dripping with the salt spray. He perceived too that she seemed to have some mysterious power over the vessel, which had been drawn from its course and was moving with increasing rapidity toward a vast cliff that rose from the sea a little off the wild coast.

An alarm was sounded and every effort was made to turn the ship in another direction. But still it was drawn on in the wake of the strange feminine figure, and the frantic orders shouted by the captain and the frenzied labors of his crew availed nothing. An invincible power controlled the ship and it never paused till it collided with the great rock. That same instant the vessel, and its crew and all that was in it changed to stone and became a part of the rock itself. There was a time when the petrified ship could be clearly seen on the face of the cliff. The waves have gradually effaced it, but a certain point of rock still remains that is said to have been the vessel's bowsprit. The wraith of the unfortunate maiden continues to linger in the neighborhood of the rock, and those who have seen her declare she is very beautiful. It is generally believed, however, that when the last vestige of the ship is worn from the rock the lady will appear no more. She only shows herself at sunset—which was the time she leaped to her death, and at that hour no fisherman of the region cares to hazard his luck by dropping a line for fish.



The Falls of Montmorency [To List](#)

Another tragic spot is found at the opposite side of the wide mouth of the river, where is an island on which was wrecked an ill-fated British expedition that had set forth to conquer Canada in 1711. There were nine ships of war and about sixty transports and other vessels, carrying in all some twelve thousand men. The fleet was in charge of Admiral Walker. Its greatest lack was pilots for the St. Lawrence, but before it reached the river a French vessel was captured commanded by a skipper named Paradis, who was an experienced old voyager and knew the river well. In consideration of a liberal bribe he consented to act as pilot, but he rather dampened the ardor of the admiral by his dismal accounts of the Canadian winter. The state of the commander's mind can be judged from this entry in his journal:

“That which now chiefly took up my thoughts was contriving how to secure the ships if we got to Quebec; for the ice in the river freezing to the bottom would have utterly destroyed and bilged them as much as if they had been squeezed between rocks.”

However, it was still summer, and all went well till the evening of August twenty-second. They were then some distance above the great island of Anticosti where the river is seventy miles wide. There was a strong east wind with fog. Walker thought that he was not far from the south shore, when in fact he was comparatively near the north shore. At half-past ten he retired to his berth and was falling asleep, when an officer hastily entered and begged him to come on deck, saying there were breakers on all sides. The admiral scoffed at such a possibility and would not stir. Soon afterward the officer returned imploring him for Heaven's sake to come up and see for himself or all would be lost. At the same time the admiral heard a great noise and trampling, and he hastily put on his dressing-gown and slippers and hurried on deck. Just then the fog opened and the moon shone forth revealing a scene of fright and confusion. The breaking surf was in plain sight, but by making all sail the ship succeeded in beating to windward and avoiding the danger. Other vessels of the fleet were not so fortunate and all night there was firing of cannon and showing of lights indicating the utmost distress. “It was lamentable to hear the shrieks of the drowning, departing souls,” writes one of the survivors. Eight transports, one storeship and one sutler's sloop were dashed to pieces, and nearly a thousand men perished.

After the men who had succeeded in reaching shore had been rescued it was decided that the expedition should be abandoned, though it was not by any means hopelessly crippled. But the admiral seems to have been possessed by a sort of nightmare with regard to the Canadian climate. He even saw cause for gratitude in his own mishaps; because, had he arrived safe at Quebec, his provisions would soon have been consumed, and he and all his men would have perished of cold and hunger. “I must confess,” he says in his journal, “the contemplation of this strikes me with horror; for how

dismal must it have been to have beheld the seas and earth locked up by adamantine frosts and swollen with high mountains of snow, in a barren and uncultivated region; great numbers of brave men famishing with hunger and drawing lots who should die first to feed the rest.”

The expedition had aroused great anxiety at Quebec and this continued until the nineteenth of October when word came of the disaster. Three Frenchmen and one Indian sent to watch for the English fleet had descended the St. Lawrence in a canoe and discovered the wrecks at Egg Island. They told how the shore was strewn with hundreds of human bodies, besides dead horses, sheep, dogs and hens, casks, cables, anchors, planks, shovels and much else.

This “miracle” of deliverance was interpreted at Quebec to show “God's love for Canada, which of all these countries, is the only one that professes the true religion.”

Amazing stories circulated concerning the English losses. It was said that three thousand of “these wretches” died after reaching land in addition to the multitude that was drowned, and even this did not satisfy divine justice, for God blew up one of the ships by lightning during the storm. Vessels sent to gather up the spoils came back laden “with marvellous treasure, including rich clothing, plate, silver-hilted swords and the like,” and reported that though the autumn tides had swept away many of the corpses, more than two thousand still lay on the rocks, in attitudes of despair.

How tragic was the early history of the river! But now it is a stream of commerce and pleasure, in most ways wholly beneficent; and for stories of human woe one has to delve into the shadowy past. May the time never come when this will be otherwise!



On the Saguenay steamer [To List](#)

XII

THE BEAUTIFUL SAGUENAY

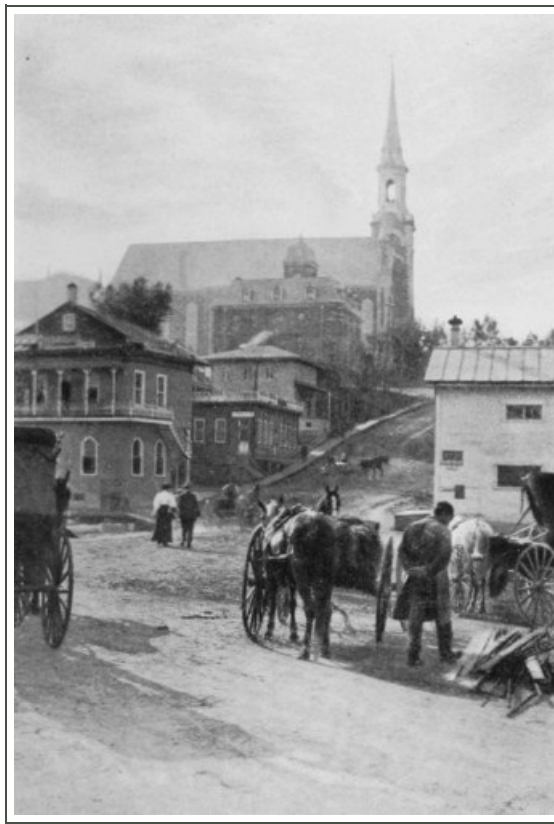
Commercially the New World yielded little to the French for many years, except to the fisherman; but the wilderness had its treasures as well as the ocean, and it needed only the enticement of a few knives, beads and trinkets to induce the Indians to part with the spoils of their winter hunting. Gradually the fishermen abandoned their old vocation for the more lucrative trade in bear and beaver skins. They built rude huts at convenient places along the waterways, abused the Indians and quarrelled with each other. One of their trading-posts was established in 1598 at Tadousac where the Saguenay joins the St. Lawrence. A cluster of wooden cabins was built amid the wild rocky heights clad with pines, firs and birches, and sixteen men were left to guard the expected harvest of furs. Before the winter was over several of the men had died, and the rest scattered through the woods, living on the charity of the Indians. A second and a third attempt was made to establish a trading-post at Tadousac, and more lives wasted.

In 1608 the French king granted a nobleman of his court named De Monts a monopoly of the St. Lawrence fur trade for one year, and a vessel was dispatched to Tadousac. When it arrived, Pontgravé, the commander, found a Basque ship there ahead of him. A brisk trade was already in progress with the Indians, and a little back from the cove that served as a harbor, were the lodges of the Indian camp—stacks of poles covered with birch bark. Pontgravé displayed the royal letters, which gave De Monts the exclusive trading rights, and ordered the Basques to cease their traffic.

But the latter proved refractory and fired on Pontgravé with cannon and musketry, wounding him and two of his men and killing a third. They then boarded his vessel and carried off his guns and ammunition, with a promise to restore them when they finished trading and were ready to return home. Champlain in another vessel representing the De Monts' interest arrived a few days later, and the Basques, though strong enough to fight with reasonable chance of success, concluded to come to terms. A treaty of peace was therefore drawn up and signed, and they betook themselves to catching whales, while Pontgravé busied himself in transferring to the hold of his ship such furs as he could secure. The Indians with whom he trafficked were Algonquins, gatherers of the skins of the moose, caribou and bear, and of the beaver, martin, otter, fox, wildcat and lynx. They served, too, as intermediate traders between the French and the roving bands who inhabited the dreary stretch of forest between the headwaters of the Saguenay and Hudson's Bay. In their light canoes the fur-seekers penetrated the remotest wilds and then returning by the devious waterways descended to the mart at Tadousac.

Several Recollect friars came to the New World in 1617 to look after the spiritual welfare of the traders and Indians. To one of these named Dolbeau, was assigned the vast wilderness around and to the north of the Saguenay, with its wandering tribes of Montagnais. Full of zeal he started the next winter to follow the roving hordes to their frozen hunting-grounds. But he was not robust, and his eyes were weak. Lodged in a hut of birch bark that was full of dogs, fleas and stench, he at length succumbed to the smoke which had well-nigh blinded him. After debating the matter within himself he decided that God did not require of him the sacrifice of his sight, and went to Quebec. Yet in the spring he returned and journeyed in his territory so far that he came in contact with outlying bands of Esquimaux.

The previous summer mass was said for the first time at Tadousac by another priest of the order. The ceremony took place in a chapel built of branches, and two sailors stood beside the priest waving green boughs to drive off the mosquitoes.



Chicoutimi [To List](#)

Tadousac was the center of the Canadian fur trade for many years; but as the fur-bearing animals disappeared, so did the commercial and political glory of the village at the mouth of the Saguenay. The appeal of the region up the river was not very strong to settlers, and until about 1840 it continued to be a wilderness, practically unknown except to the few hunters who penetrated its fastnesses. Since then its forest resources have attracted capital, the sections adapted to farming have been developed, and various thriving towns have sprung into being. It is no longer a region of isolated trading-posts. As for Tadousac, that is now a quiet hamlet, its prosperity less dependent on commerce than on its noble scenic surroundings. It has the distinction of being the first French station on the St. Lawrence from which evolved a permanent town; and there is still standing in the village a little church which was the earliest built in Canada. However, the most dominant feature of the place at present is a great wide-spreading wooden hotel for summer vacationists. The vicinity is famous for its fishing which offers a variety extending from the Tommy cod for the children to the river, lake, and brook trout and salmon that delight the most exacting angler.

Without doubt the Saguenay trip is one of the greatest attractions that the St. Lawrence Valley has to offer. It begins at Quebec and occupies two days. The start is made down the St. Lawrence in the early morning, and, touching along at the north shore villages, you reach Tadousac in the evening and go up the Saguenay at night. On my trip up the latter stream the deep starlit sky was illumined by faint weird streaks and bands of the aurora, and I sat long on deck watching this electric display and the black mountains that guarded the shores. At dawn the next day we were pushing along intermittently up the river waiting on the pleasure of a fog that was slowly drifting ahead of us. So we were much behind our schedule in arriving at Chicoutimi, the head of steamboat navigation. This place is the great lumber-yard of the north, to which the timber is brought down chiefly by the rapid upper Saguenay. The name of the town is an Indian word that means "Up here it is deep." But great depth of water is not confined to Chicoutimi's immediate vicinity for the river is as near bottomless as it well could be all the way from there to the St. Lawrence.

An interesting stream with the same name as the town joins the Saguenay close by. It makes a descent of about five hundred feet in seventeen miles. Among the numerous carrying-places beside this turbulent river is one known as *Portage de l'Enfant*, so called in commemoration of the remarkable escape of an Indian child that was carried over the neighboring falls. These falls are fifty feet high, yet the child was rescued uninjured.

The source of the Saguenay is Lake St. John, into which drains a vast network of lesser streams that abound with beautiful waterfalls. The finest of these cataracts is probably the Ouiatchouan Falls which makes a foaming descent of more than three hundred feet down a steep ledge. All this section of country is thickly studded with lakes, and there is the

best of fishing, and much large game such as deer, bear, moose and the wapiti. Perhaps nowhere else in the vast basin of the St. Lawrence will the sportsman and the lover of the grand and beautiful in nature find better reward for their toil.

A good deal of geological interest attaches to the rock formation of the region; for the Laurentide range forms the backbone of the oldest mountain chain on the globe. In the glacial period of our planet's history, a cold salt sea similar to that between Labrador and Greenland covered a great part of this Laurentian country to the depth of hundreds of feet.

There is a peculiar geological interest also in the individuality of the Saguenay. The stream occupies a tremendous chasm where occurred a fault in the ancient Archæan rock. Here a glacier made for itself a deeply eroded bed, and when the ice melted, the sea filled the vast defile. At its mouth the river is at least six hundred feet deeper than the St. Lawrence, and the scenery along its lower course, for some sixty miles is magnificent. The tides run very strong in this wide channel, and sometimes attain a height of eighteen feet.

It is the custom of the steamboat to wait at Chicoutimi till advantage can be taken of the ebb flow, and on my trip we did not start until nearly noon. For a long time we went on amid scenery that was in no wise remarkably striking. But at length the boat rounded Cape West and proceeded to the head of Ha! Ha! Bay, a charming sheet of water about two miles wide and seven long. Its name is supposed to be derived from the laughing exclamations of the early French explorers, who sailed up the Bay under the impression that they were following the main channel of the river, and soon found farther progress barred. At the head of the Bay is the picturesque village of St. Alphonse; and the sight of it was the more welcome because usually on this river trip we had not a single habitation in view.

As we continued southward the bordering hills were higher, and at the waterside was a constant succession of precipices of solemn and impressive grandeur, scantily enlivened by vegetation. The scenery culminates at Capes Trinity and Eternity. These twin promontories soar upward in almost perpendicular cliffs from the water's edge, and between them a little bay opens inland. Cape Trinity gets its name from the fact that it lifts its great mass in three successive heights. This makes it suggestive of the steps of a mighty flight of stairs, and each step is about six hundred feet high making a total of nearly two thousand feet. It is of interest also to know that the water at the base of the capes is said to be as deep as they are high. These stupendous cliffs dwarf everything else of this nature to be found in the eastern portion of the continent, and the bald eagle builds its nest in the niches of the precipices secure from intrusion. Immense blocks of the rock have fallen out, leaving areas of shadow and clinging overhanging masses that are a terror and a fascination to the eye. Some years ago there was a great fall of rock just as the steamer which loiters here for the pleasure of the tourists had passed from under and blown its whistle to arouse the echoes. "The echo came back and with it a part of the mountain that astonished more than it delighted the lookers-on."

John Burroughs, in relating his impressions of Cape Eternity, says that when the vessel was sailing close around the base of the precipice "One of the boys of the steamer brought to the forward deck his hands full of stones that the curious ones among the passengers might try how easy it was to throw one ashore. 'Any girl ought to do it,' I said to myself.

"Seizing a stone, I cast it with vigor and confidence, and as much expected to see it smite the rock as I expected to live. 'It is a good while getting there,' I mused, as I watched its course. Down, down it went—'It will ring on the granite in half a breath.' No, down into the water, a little more than half way! 'Has my arm lost its cunning?' I said, and tried again and again, but with like result. The eye was completely at fault. There was a new standard of size before it to which it failed to adjust itself. The rock is so enormous and towers so above you that you get the impression it is much nearer than it actually is. There is an astonishing discrepancy between what the eye reports and what the hand finds out."

Bayard Taylor has spoken of the Saguenay as the "River of Death," and there has been an inclination to describe it as silent and gloomy, and so narrow and environed by dark cliffs that the sunshine rarely penetrates to its sombre channel, and no breeze can reach its unruffled waters. As a matter of fact it is usually a mile or more broad and the light of heaven and the winds play over it as they do over other streams. Nor are you inclined to melancholy as you sail its waters and view the changing scene, unless you have brought your melancholy with you.

The bordering region, however, with its stony mountains bulwarking the river offers little encouragement to home seekers or even for grazing. Many of the heights have been swept by fire recently enough to bear witness to the fact by their bristling of charred tree-trunks still standing, and their lack of vegetation. Much of the soil has been burned, or has been washed away after losing the protection of the shade and fibrous roots of the forest. The flinty slopes indeed seem never likely to support a fine woodland in the future. Ordinarily the devastation was begun by the lumberman and fire completed the ruin of the once noble forest along the Saguenay. Wherever the white man goes into the wilderness the

havoc of fire seems to go with him. This was illustrated by what was told me of the building of the railway from Quebec to Lake St. John. It was a great expense, the rocks on the route were so hard; yet it cost the public far more than the outlay of the railway company; for the fires carelessly allowed to escape by the workmen burned millions of dollars worth of forest.

XIII

THE ST. LAWRENCE IN WINTER

Above Quebec the river is icebound from early December until April. Below Quebec there is ice in plenty, to but it does not freeze hard and fast from shore to shore. With the ebb and flow of every tide the broken masses go surging now down, now up; and while navigation on the lower river is not impossible, only one or two government boats continue active. All other traffic is abandoned, and the ocean-going vessels do not resume their trips much before the first of May; for there is a long aftermath of winter in this great waterway. The river's quieter portions, and the various streams and broad lakes that are tributary to it freeze to a great thickness. The ice breaks up at different times in different localities, so that the series of “ice-shoves” the St. Lawrence experiences extends over several weeks. As the ice crowds along down the channel it jams and piles up and often forms bergs of enormous size. At no time is the aspect of the river wilder.



Cape Eternity and Cape Trinity [To List](#)

I chose to make a pilgrimage to this northern waterway in February, because I had a fancy that then I would find winter most impressive—that all the accumulated snows of the preceding months would be on view, and that frost and keen winds would be as rampant as they are in the bitterest days of the season in Boston or New York. But the valley of the St. Lawrence has not, after all, a climate so radically different from that of our adjacent states as we are inclined to imagine. Spells of soft weather in February are almost a certainty, and even a January thaw is looked for with a good deal of confidence. But the natives all affirm that winter does not relax its grip for good until March seventeenth. I at first wondered why they named this date with such exactness and assurance. When I asked for a reason they mentioned that the seventeenth was St. Patrick's Day. So much warmth is developed on the occasion that not even a Canadian winter can withstand it.

The weather at Montreal at the time of my visit was decidedly mild. There had been a day of rain immediately before which had carried off a good deal of the snow, yet all the vehicles drawn by horses were still on runners. Much of the natural accumulations of snow on the chief business streets had been previously carted off, and the thaw had taken most of the rest. What remained had been compacted by travel into ice, but it was so dirty that traffic moved very laboriously. Many a load got stranded on the bare tracks of the car lines, and if the struggle to get off seemed at all doubtful a crowd would gather to watch the solving of the problem. The spectacle was especially fascinating if a horse attached to a sled showed its disapproval of the situation by kicking.

Except on the main thoroughfares the snow continued to be very plentiful, and there were amazing heaps along the gutters, and in the yards of residences, and in nooks about the buildings. Some of the churches were half buried in the

masses that had slid down from the roofs. One effect of the warm spell was to bring out the frost in great white patches on the thick walls of the houses of worship and other stone structures. Perhaps the most interesting glimpses of the winter city were to be had by going through the occasional archways that give access from the business streets to little courts and areas in the rear. The snow heaps there on earth and galleries and huddled roofs were sure to be exceedingly picturesque.

I early sought the waterside to see how winter had changed the stream opposite the city. Not an atom of its warm weather vivacity remained. It was a vast vacancy of snowy ice, except for dark glades of rippling water where the current was swiftest. The wharves which are so busy in summer were deserted by all shipping and were cleared of much of their ordinary fixtures to give free sweep to the ice-shoves. Yet many teams were coming and going along shore, some bringing freight to or from the cars on the railroad that skirts the wharves, others getting goods from the great warehouses on the piers; and there was a long procession of little one-horse sledges that were carrying surplus snow from the town to dump it by the river borders.

A few weeks previous there had been a ten-days' ice carnival in the city, and an ice palace had been built on the upland at the foot of the bluff of Mount Royal. The Montreal ice palace is famed all over America, and pictures of it appear in the papers everywhere. It is something so unique and the idea of celebrating the pleasures of winter so charms the fancy that there is a widespread desire to see the glittering structure. Nevertheless the number of visitors it actually draws from the States is comparatively small. The drift of humanity in winter is toward a warmer climate, and people shrink from encountering the rigors of a more northerly section than that to which they are accustomed, even though they acknowledge theoretically that the steady, dry cold usually characteristic of the St. Lawrence valley in winter is invigorating, healthful and pleasurable.

The ice palace as a winter feature of Montreal has not proved a success financially, and there is some doubt of its being erected in future. Its crystal walls and aspiring towers and turrets cover a considerable area, and both the size and the castle-like, medieval architecture are impressive; but the cost of construction is too great for the patronage. The blocks of ice used are enormous and weigh about five hundred pounds each. They are handled with derricks, and are cemented together with a mixture of snow and water. At night the building is lighted by electricity, and on certain special occasions there are displays of fireworks, and a battle takes place between a storming party and defenders.



The road up Mount Royal [To List](#)

The people of Montreal are by no means unanimous in approving of the palace. Some object to it because they think it

advertises the frigidity of the region, and they fear possible visitors will be repelled rather than attracted. They themselves make a brave claim that their winter is not disturbingly severe or disagreeable, and I have no doubt that in many ways they enjoy it. But I am persuaded from chance remarks made to me that they find it rather tedious and at times decidedly harsher than they relish. For instance, one lady told me how a stranger stopped her on the street with the remark: "Excuse me, but your nose is frozen." "And it was," she said, "but I was warned in time so that little harm was done."

The city has numerous covered skating rinks in which ice sports are enjoyed to perfection all winter. Both sexes resort to these rinks, and the fancy dress carnivals afford a very attractive spectacle. Of the various games played on the ice hockey is the favorite, and there is much rivalry between the clubs of the different cities. A well-contested match is a sight that is extremely graceful and interesting. Skating is perhaps the amusement that has the most devotees, but tobogganing and snowshoeing are also very popular. Montreal boasts of about twenty snowshoe clubs, and as each club has its distinctive uniform of bright-colored blanket, coat, and cowl, a procession of snowshoers on a tramp presents a very gay and enlivening appearance.

Mount Royal is the winter playground of the people. They can take advantage of the splendid sleighing on the long, easy grade of the road that winds around the height through the woods; or they can put on snowshoes and go climbing through the hollows and over the ridges and along the bypaths; or they can resort to the magnificent toboggan slide, well up toward the summit on the gentle southern slope. One may grant that in the city itself the snow and cold constitute something of a nuisance, but there is no question that on Mount Royal the crystalline air and the clean omnipresent mantle of the snow, and the joy and warmth of activity and lively sport are wholly delightful.



Snowbound [To List](#)

To see the ideal St. Lawrence winter, however, the traveller must visit Quebec. It is farther north than Montreal, is more steadily cold, and gets more deeply buried in snow. The weather had taken a chill turn while I was on my way thither, and when I arrived a bleak wind was blowing that almost took me off my feet in the exposed places. But the town was really adorable, it looked so genuinely yet snugly cold. Everywhere was frost and snow—the place was enveloped in white, and even the grim cliffs and battlements were half hidden. There was beautiful sleighing, and the vehicles were generally fascinating in their quaintness. They were low, clumsy and heavy, and the runners were made out of planks set on edge and gracefully curved at the front and shod with iron. The milk carts and shopkeepers' conveyances usually had a step at the back where the driver stood.

For pleasure riding the favorite sleigh is what is called a "cariole." It is of the same type that I have described and has sides rather more than knee high. Wraps and fur robes are supplied in abundance, and the finest robe in the outfit hangs loosely over the back, giving the cariole a jaunty air of warmth and luxuriousness that is quite enticing.

The horses of the town are sure-footed beasts, and I could not but be astonished at the alacrity with which they jogged down the steep descents, often making a long slide at every footstep. I think the people must be sure-footed, too; for the walks were covered with ice, and it apparently was not considered necessary to sprinkle them with ashes or sand. In places, however, rude steps had been cut in the ice on the steeper walks, and I noticed that if the grade and slipperiness were excessive the pedestrians often resorted to the streets.

Evidently the townsfolk on the whole enjoyed the winter; for I saw no shivering discomfort, but much of brisk energy. Everyone seemed to be prepared for the cold and ready to withstand its utmost rigors. That its sharpness was often superlative was attested by the common habit of wearing a fur hat, and very likely a fur coat, or at least a generous fur collar.

There were marvellous accumulations of snow where it had drifted or been shovelled into heaps, and some of the narrower streets would probably have been filled to the tops of the buildings that lined them, had the snow not been carted off. That curious little street, Sous le Cap, was a weird sight, in spite of all the clearing that had been done. Snow was clinging everywhere on roofs, stairways and rocks, and it piled up in the street so that it was impossible to keep it entirely out of the adjacent houses.

The rigor of winter was even more apparent when I climbed to the citadel on the exposed summit of the bluff. The fortress was half buried, and the approach to it was guarded against the drifts by a long snowshed. Down below, the river was a mass of broken ice, and the water showed only in occasional streaks and patches. In the quiet intervals between the tides the ice is apt to freeze into an almost continuous mass, but when the current is strong it is broken up again and swept up or down the stream, whichever way the tide is setting.

Two stout ferryboats ply back and forth across the river and do much to keep the ice moving. They follow the open lanes when they can, yet do not hesitate to butt into the floes and crunch along through them. In the wild winter storms the prevailing wind crowds the ice against the Quebec shore, and then the ferryboats may be an hour or more in crossing. Ordinarily, no trips are made between midnight and six in the morning; but when the weather is cold a sharp watch is kept, and if the ice shows signs of forming a permanent bridge the boats start out to break it up. Only once in the last twenty years has the river here been icebound. To quote the words of my informant: "The ice caught in January and formed a bridge fifteen miles long that lasted the rest of the winter. We walked, skated and drove all around on it, and held carnivals out in mid-river."

Two or three important railroads have their Quebec terminal on the south shore of the river, and such a blockade is so serious a matter that every effort is made to keep the ice moving. The portion of the river that flows north of the Isle of Orleans, however, is frozen over and people drive back and forth between the mainland and the island at various places for months.

The aspect of Quebec was satisfactorily wintry, but I wanted also to see the outlying country, so I journeyed down the river to one of the rural villages, and trudged for many miles along the drifted roadways. It was storming and the wind drove the prickling sleet against my face, and whirled it over the fields to pile it up in the lee of the hills or other obstructions. The snow lay even with the tops of the fences. Never before had I seen a region so buried; and yet I was told there was not half as much snow this winter as usual, and that the recent thaw had settled it about three feet.



February in a country village [To List](#)

After each storm it is customary to go over the road with a scraper that smooths the snow off, and then with a roller that packs it down hard. The hardened trail is wide enough to allow teams to pass each other, but woe betide the driver who gets off the rolled space. To prevent such straying the more doubtful portions of the road are marked with spruce saplings thrust in at intervals along the hardened portion.

It seemed as if the snow would linger till midsummer, but the spring rains and warm winds that sweep through the valley carry it off like magic. As soon as it softens travel is practically impossible, for the horses at every footstep sink down almost out of sight. Most people then either wait for a freeze, or, if the season is too far advanced to expect such hardening, the men get out with shovels and open a rough way through the worst places.

The storm I encountered did not appear to deter the people from going about their work. They were sawing wood in their dooryards, piling sleds with pulpwood by the roadside, and driving loads to the village. The homes I passed were not very attractive. As a rule the houses were small and their architecture was pretentious and tawdry. There was a fatal desire to make a show, especially at the front, which was often painted to imitate stone or brick and had a very ornamental door and window-casings. It mattered not if the rest of the structure was commonplace and even shabby, if only that deceptive front, which deceived nobody, was sufficiently palatial. The only quiet, simple and beautiful dwellings were the occasional stone houses that date far back into the past, and which most likely are despised by the local public for their lack of attractiveness. The surroundings of the houses were usually quite devoid of the saving touch of grace that sheltering trees would have lent them, and this bleakness of aspect is the more regrettable because it is unnecessary.

I did not have much luck in chatting with the people I met, for they could rarely speak anything but French. Most of them are poor, and—poor or rich—they are economical by habit and “live on the smell of an oil rag,” as one valley man informed me.

They probably have the most attenuated farms to be found on the face of the earth. Some of the strips are hardly wider than the dwellings that stand on them; but I could see fences that marked the boundary lines sweeping far away up the slope to a fringe of spruce in the distance, and extending in the other direction down the steep hill and across the lowland to the river.

That the deep snows and the cold and the fierce storms of the winter must have been frightful to the early explorers in a savage wilderness, I could easily comprehend; but now, with assurance of food and shelter, the season's ugly aspect is gone, and it offers to the traveller much that is delightful. “No matter how cold it is,” said one Canadian, “I can work every day, and I feel in the mood for working, too. That's more than the people can say who live in warmer regions where they don't have a good snappy winter. I wouldn't want to exchange our climate for any other; and yet, I tell you, it looks good in the spring when the frost weakens its grip and the snow melts and we begin to see the brown of the fields.”

Certainly the St. Lawrence is one of the noblest and most interesting of our great waterways, and a visit to it is well repaid in either summer or winter. Best of all see it at both seasons, for only so can you feel that you have a thorough

knowledge of its charms.

Transcriber's Notes:

Hyphenated words have been normalized. Printer's punctuation errors have been silently corrected. All else has been left as in the original except where noted below.

Introductory Note—Typo corrected from indivuality to individuality.

[Page 3](#)—Typo corrected from poineers to pioneers.

[Page 57](#)—Typo corrected from frow to from.

[Page 67](#)—Typo corrected from litte to little.

[Page 75](#)—Typo corrected from fusilade to fusillade.

[Page 85](#)—Typo corrected from them to they.

[Page 238](#)—Typo corrected from is to it.

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[End of *The Picturesque St. Lawrence* by Clifton Johnson]