

THE CALUMETTE.

A PASSAGE FROM TOM CLIFDEN'S "OTTAWA SKETCHES."

BY H. J. FRIEL.

Lake after lake interminably gleam:

And past the settler's haunts the eye might roam,

Where earth's unliving silence all would seem.

Save where on rocks the beaver built his dome.

Campbell.

Our boat flies light along the leafy shore,

Shooting the falls without a dip of oar.

Or breath of zephyr, like the my-tie bark,

Borne, without sails, along the dusky flood,

While on its deck a pilot angel stood.

Moore.

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Roll on, grand and majestic Ottawa, roll on, till thy still grander brother struggles in thy embrace, and with him bend your onward course towards your ocean home. Although the great St. Lawrence may boast of its awful and sublime Niagara—its Thousand Isles—the beautiful splendour of its inland seas—the great extent of its navigable boundaries, and the thousands that have settled on its banks, to feed their thoughtful fancy in contemplating its varied scenery; yet can the Ottawa boast that next to it alone it bears the regal crown. Its bold and romantic banks rising like the ruined walls of some ancient castle, their summits covered with lofty pines and wide spread oaks—its rich and fertile country fast settling,—and the old monarch's of the forest groan and fall as the cheering echo of the woodman's axe resounds upon the ear. The awful grandeur of its picturesque scenery—its splendid water-falls—the almost chaste natural architecture of its Rideau—the sublimity of its crashing and often described Chaudière, with the noble work of art which spans its midst—its perilous Long Sault, Chatts, Snows, Poquette, Mountain, Sable, Calumette and Allouette rapids, all vying with each other in the gorgeous and variegated splendour of their scenery. It has, like other monarchs, its many vassals, who ever pour into its midst the watery tribute—the Lever, Blanche, Gattineau, Rideau, Mississippi, Bonchere, Madawaska, Black, Pittawawa, Chalk, and numerous other streams of minor note, tumble and foam o'er rock and shore to meet the embrace of their stern and monstrous guardian. But, a truce to description:—a Lever, a Dickens, or a James might revel, like the gay votaries of Bacchus, when at their wine-cups, in this wide field for imaginative scribbling; but I have o'erstepped my prescribed bounds. My story leads me to a time when, a vacation occurring at the college of —, a few of the students, myself

among the number, determined upon paying a short visit to our different homes, and agreed upon a general rendezvous, for the purpose of spending our short term of leave in the pleasantest and most instructive manner. Our ages varied from eighteen to twenty-three, and our course of studies was fast drawing to a close—the time would soon arrive when each of us was to try his fortune among the sons of men.

Ours was a gay party—eight mirthful and jovial youths, just emerging for a brief period from the tedious monotony of a college life. Our leader on this occasion formed the ninth. He was an old school-fellow, who, disdaining the effeminate life (as he was pleased to call it) of poring over the classic Homer's tragic pages, puzzling your brain with geometrical figures, algebraical problems, or diving through the depths of the erudite Euclid, with all the numerous train of studies to which college students have to cling, till, like some learned professor, they can call them all "their own"—leaped, as he supposed, from the dreadful task, and launched himself upon the busy world in an occupation much more manly, if not so honourable. He engaged in the lumber business, and after some years of difficulty, succeeded in establishing himself as an extensive merchant in the trade. He invited us to accompany him on an excursion up the Ottawa, from which he promised we would derive much gratification. We assented, and in a few days after we began our journey. Our progress upwards was rapid, and the river from Grenville to the future "city" of Bytown having been so often described it would be superfluous to trouble the reader with any detail. On the third day after our departure, we reached Portage du Fort, from which place we were to proceed in canoes to Fort William, the extent of our excursion. We intended to spend a few days in that delightful region, and then return homewards. We left the Portage in two canoes, and soon arrived at the Calumette, at which romantic spot we spent a night. We viewed the rapid by the pale moonlight, when most of Adam's race by Morpheus were ensnared, and as Luna receded from the cover of a cloud, the philosophic M. broke forth in the strain of the modern hero of the Hellespont—

"Goddess serene, transcending every star!
Queen of the sky, whose beams are seen afar."

Our friend informed us that, strange as it may appear, the Ottawa is not without its old traditions of bye-gone days, and this terrific rapid was the scene of the following Legend:

About half a century ago, when the great opposition between the contending fur-trading com-