

JACQUES CARTIER AND THE LITTLE INDIAN GIRL.

BY H. V. C.

THE first expedition of Jacques Cartier, to the Canadian shore, in 1534, proved highly satisfactory to his royal master, Francis I., to whose ambition it offered the hope of that new empire beyond the western ocean, which Spain, sanctioned by the Pope, had already appropriated to herself. But the locality, or the extent of the western hemisphere, was very imperfectly understood by those early navigators; the Atlantic was literally an unknown pathway to them, and the degrees of latitude which intervene between the north and south extremes, on their confused charts, presented no tangible point, to which they might steer their frail and adventurous barks. It is no wonder, then, that while various nations were seeking the same destination, their navigators were drifted wide asunder, tossed about by uncertain winds, and borne away on unknown tides; but the Spaniards, doubtless, thought themselves fortunate when they gained the fertile region of Florida, and the rich mines of Mexico and Peru; and Jacques Cartier, with equal pride, again entered the bays and rivers of the more sterile north.

In 1535, Cartier again obtained a royal commission, and sailed from France with three vessels, well fitted up for his important undertaking. He entered the River St. Lawrence, on the festival of the martyr whose name it bears, and in whose honor it was so called, and anchored a short time at the Isle of Orleans, which he called Bacchus, from its extreme fertility, and the abundance of its clustering vines. There he was visited in great state, by Donnacona, a renowned chief, attended by a multitude of swarthy warriors, and many acts of courtesy were exchanged between them. Two natives whom he carried away on his former voyage, had returned with him, and acted as interpreters; and their representations probably contributed to procure for Cartier, a warm and friendly reception, from the simple hearted savages.

Having heard of a large settlement, farther up the river called Hochelaga, he left the Port de St. Croix, or Quebec, and proceeded on his way to seek it, having first ordered a discharge of twelve cannons, whose thunders echoed through

the forest, while the bullets sent from them, pierced the trees, and rattled among their branches, to the great terror and astonishment of the natives.

At the Current St. Mary, Cartier and his people disembarked, and proceeded on foot, their way lying chiefly through extensive fields of Indian corn, then in the green ear, and presenting a beautiful appearance. Hochelaga itself, to the lively Frenchman, looked like an Island of enchantment. Robed in the richest verdure of a brief Canadian summer, it lay on the margin of that broad and mighty stream, whose restless current, tossing and foaming in the sunlight, sent the murmur of its chafed waters far on the quiet air, like the thunder of a distant cataract. The village, encircled by three rows of palisades, which completely guarded it from outward attack, contained the wigwams or dwellings of the inhabitants, some fifty or sixty in number, clustered thickly together, and completely embowered with foliage. Behind it, Mount Royal, with its peculiar and graceful outline, rose into the clear sky, covered by a dark, impenetrable forest, and before it, amidst the dancing waves, the lovely islands now called Nuns' and St. Helens', lay glistening with their thousand varying hues and deepening shades, fast anchored in the rushing stream.

Such was Montreal, when first beheld by the eye of civilized man; how different now, with its busy streets, its stately houses, and thronged wharves, the seat of opulence and commerce!

The Hochelaga Indians were of the Huron tribe, and Jacques Cartier was received by them with cordial hospitality, and treated with the most deferential kindness. Indeed they seemed to regard him as belonging to a superior order of beings, and they even brought their sick and infirm to him, believing that he had power to heal them.

Jacques Cartier returned to Quebec, early in the autumn, accompanied by several of the natives as a guard of honor; he made arrangements to pass the winter in that place, but totally unprepared for the severity of the climate, and deprived of European comforts, many of his people died, and few of them escaped severe sick-