

THE CITY OF MONTREAL.

There is no more profitable reading than local histories, and especially the record of the growth and progress of our great cities, and certainly the history of no city is more worthy of attention than that of Montreal, whether we regard its early strifes and struggles so full of romance, or its miraculous progress during more recent generations.

Of the City of Montreal to-day, it may be said:

On the fair borders of a mighty stream
Rises the noblest city of our land;
Its palaces and wharves, and streets command
Our wondering awe, and set our minds to dream
What agency could thus have called to life
So much that's beautiful, and great, and high;
Viewed from a lofty point, how free from strife
Appear its dwellings outlined on the sky,
Just veiled by misty haze which seems to hide
Their cracks and wrinkles from a searching eye.
As men of old who kept a fair outside
Were haies-rowed, their powers to magnify,
Great City, offspring of a people's will!
Gor by their needs, and fostered by their skill!

But in speaking of Montreal, it will be necessary to begin at the very beginning; the first record we have is the arrival of Jacques Cartier in 1535; he visited Stadacona (now Quebec) on September 14th of that year, and allowing himself a rest of three days only, he proceeded up the river with an exploring party. For this purpose, he manned his smallest ship, the *Emerillon*, and two boats, and departed on the 19th September, leaving the other ships at the mouth of the St. Charles. He had learned from the Indians that there was another town, called Hochelaga, situated about sixty leagues above; Cartier and his companions, the first European navigators of the St. Lawrence, and the earliest pioneers of civilization and Christianity in those regions, moved slowly up the river. At the part now called Lake St. Peter, the water seemed to become more and more shallow. The *Emerillon* was left as well secured as possible, and the remainder of the passage made in the two boats. Frequent meetings, of a friendly nature, with Indians on the river bank caused delays, so that they did not arrive at Hochelaga until the end of October.

As described by Cartier himself, this town consisted of about fifty large huts or cabins, which, for purposes of defence, were surrounded by wooden palisades. There were upwards of 1,200 inhabitants, belonging to some Algonquin tribe. At Hochelaga, as previously at Stadacona, the French were received by the natives in a friendly manner. Cartier sought information respecting the country higher up the river. From their imperfect intelligence it appears that he learned the existence of several great lakes, and that beyond the largest and most remote of these there was another great river which flowed southward. They conducted him to the summit of a mountain behind the town, whence he surveyed the prospect of a wilderness stretching to the south and west as far as the eye could reach, and beautifully diversified by elevations of land, and by water.

Whatever credit Cartier attached to their vague statements about the geography of their country, he was certainly struck by the grandeur of the scenery as viewed from the eminence on which he stood. To this he gave the name of *Mont Royal*, whence the name of Montreal was conferred on the city which has grown up on the site of the ancient Indian town, Hochelaga. Cartier remained only two days, commencing his passage down the river on the 14th of October.

Cartier's account of his voyages, and of the features of the country, as well as his estimate of the two principal sites upon which, in after times, the two cities—Quebec and Montreal—have grown, illustrate his sagacity.

When the place was visited by Frenchmen more than half a century later, very few savages were seen, and these were different from those seen by Cartier, while the town itself was no longer in existence. Champlain, upwards of seventy years after Jacques Cartier, visited Hochelaga, but made no mention in his narrative either of the town or of inhabitants.

On his third voyage to Canada, Cartier again visited Hochelaga, leaving the station at Cap Rouge, on September 7th, 1541, with a party of men in two barges. On the passage up he found the Indians whom he had met in 1535, as friendly as before. The natives of Hochelaga seemed also well disposed, and rendered all the assistance in their power, to enable him to attempt the passage up the rapids situated above the town. Failing to accomplish this, he remained a short time amongst them gathering all the information they could furnish about the regions bordering on the Upper St. Lawrence. He then hastened back to Cap Rouge.

The next mention we find of Hochelaga was in 1603, when Champlain in conjunction with Pontgravé, made his first voyage to the St. Lawrence. At Tadoussac they left their ships and ascended the river in boats, to the then furthest attainable point—the Sault St. Louis—now known as the Lachine Rapids, above the City of Montreal. The

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