

" THE SOO "

The early days of Sault Ste. Marie are rich in the lore of a past that is slipping from us far too quickly. The country surrounding the present city was the scene of many an interesting tale of the life of the Red Men. The Sault Ste. Marie Indians were of the Algonquin stock, the most numerous of Indian tribes. Where they came from we do not know. For over three hundred years the white man has known of their existence around St. Mary's Rapids, but statements made by the Indians themselves lead us back into a very obscure past. The legends tell of red men living by a great ocean to the west. They were fighters and hunters of the sturdiest type.

But Sault Ste. Marie was not always the name of this locality. As the waters tumbled down over the rapids, through the narrow straits, the braves gathered on the shores murmured to each other "Baw-a-teeg," which was the word used in speaking of the phenomenon. When speaking of the place it was called "Baw-a-ting." The generations who lived and died in Baw-a-ting spent their time in hunting, fighting, fishing and feasting. From the earliest time the tribe around St. Mary's River was known as the Ojibway tribe. The totem of the Sault Indians was the crane.

Until the time of the American Revolution there was no thought of dividing the history of the two shores of the St. Mary's River. Whatever happened on either side entered into the tale of the St. Mary's country. Voyageurs travelling up to Lake Superior portaged impartially on the north and south shores of the falls.