

which was so distracted by the news of the movements of Pontiac and his allies throughout the West. But what caused him alarm was the fact that there was a stranger, evidently a Frenchman, in company with these Indians. This fact was not to be passed by without notice at a time when there were doubts as to the fidelity of the Canadian Indians, and rumors were prevalent that there were emissaries of the Western tribes endeavoring to excite them into taking part in the great contest which Pontiac hoped would drive the English pale-face for ever from the land.

As the Indians were already some distance above the rapids, Hay determined to set out early next morning on a visit to Isle-aux-Noix, which he had not intended making until the following week. It was just probable, he concluded, that he would see or hear something of the Indians if he lost no time in following them; but as there were already some hours before dark, he thought it a wise measure to send out a voyageur in whom he had confidence, and one of the rangers in the Fort, who was well known as a scout, to overtake the Indians if possible. A point about two miles above the Rapids was chosen as the place where the scouts would meet him and his party early next morning.

CHAPTER III.

His nervous hand the paddle drew,
And soon within the light canoe,
With fearless and belabored stroke,
Out o'er the sullen wave he broke;
But now the river seemed to grow
More loud and furious in its flow.

Hiawrah.—CARROLL RYAN.

Some streaks of crimson athwart the Eastern sky, just above the verge of the horizon, gave promise of the rising of the sun and a glorious summer day, when Hay and his party started for their trip up the Richelieu. It was Hay's intention to start for the Lake in batteaux a short distance above the Rapids, as soon as he had effected the purpose which had hurried his departure; and accordingly he only took five men with him,—three rangers and two voyageurs—and gave orders to the others to meet him on the evening of the same

day, at a place where there were boats and canoes ready for use. As they left the Fort and moved through the woods, they caught glimpses of the rapids rushing tumultuously around the prettily wooded islets at the entrance of that beauteous expansion of river called the Basin of Chambly. Away beyond could be seen the charming heights of Belœil, which overlook the river and form so prominent a feature in the landscape. The whole aspect of the scene was delightfully peaceful; nothing broke the prevalent stillness except the noisy waters as they rushed headlong over the rocks, through a wilderness of foliage, still wet with the dews of night.

Hay found the scouts awaiting him at the rendezvous above the rapids, with the welcome news that they had succeeded in overtaking the Indians, who were then camping close to the river side, about a mile further up. As they had been instructed by Hay, they had not gone into the camp; but they were sure that the party were Abenakis, and that they were on a peaceful mission, for they were evidently careless of being seen; but they were dressed in all their finery, and evidently on an important business. It was singular, however, that they could see nothing of the stranger. It was just probable he had not accompanied the Indians, but the fact that they were delaying their voyage up the river rather strengthened the surmise of one of the voyageurs, that he was absent somewhere in the woods, and the party was awaiting his return. If the latter surmise were correct, then, Hay argued, he must have gone up to the Fort for some purpose or other.

Hay determined to pay a visit to the Indians before he proceeded further on his journey, and accordingly gave orders to launch the canoes, which were concealed a short distance further up, for the use of men who might be visiting Isle-aux-Noix and other stations on the Richelieu. Under the guidance of the scouts, Hay had no difficulty in finding the Indians, who were unconcernedly lolling about the camp, smoking and eating. They were Abenakis, as the scouts supposed, and were