

Lachine, and Origin of its Canal.

The waterways of Canada, leading from the great lakes of the interior, outward to the high seas, are a very important factor in the material prosperity of Canada, and are, therefore, suitable subjects for the consideration and study of this Society. In their developments, they have followed the march of progress which is everywhere evident in our country, and they have a history of their own, which is most interesting to relate. The subject of this paper, "The Origin of the Lachine Canal," is a most fascinating one. It brings us as far back as Jacques Cartier, who, in 1535, in his second voyage to Canada, was the first intrepid European explorer to go up the St. Lawrence from the present City of Montreal as far as the rapids, but was unable to ascend farther, on account of the swiftness of the current. His first project on his third voyage in 1541 was to explore the "Sault," as it was afterwards called. Starting with a single launch, manned by double the ordinary crew of oarsmen, and seeing that the ascent could not be made, he decided to proceed by land. Directing his way along a beaten path, he met four Indians and explained to them, by signs, his desire to see the head of the rapids. The braves offered themselves, but, after a long tramp, they told Cartier that there were other rapids in the distance. Whether this information discouraged the explorer, we cannot say; the records only tell us that he retraced his steps to the landing place, launched his boat and returned to his starting point. Cartier never again visited the "Sault," and sixty years elapsed before France again concerned herself about the St. Lawrence and her rapids.

In 1603 Champlain arrived in the country with the intention of establishing a colony. On June 4th of that year, accompanied by Dupont Gravé, he determined to explore the big rapid which was made known through the visit of Cartier. The following July, after three miles of hard rowing, he arrived at the foot of the rapid, where he found some three or four feet of water. The ascent in a small boat was not feasible, and desiring to explore the extent of the rapid, after the example of Cartier, he proceeded by land along the North shore of the river for a distance of three miles, which, in his opinion, was about the length of the rapid. Finding he could go no further, he went back to his boat. On his return, he decided to lay the site of his