

RUNNING THE RAPIDS.



ABOUT five-and-twenty years ago, at the head of the Long Sault Rapids on the Ottawa, there resided a family of the name of Drummond. On that, one of the mightiest water powers in the new world, Mr. Drummond had erected saw mills on a gigantic scale, the produce of which, was conveyed down the rapids to Montreal, by experienced and skilful raftsmen, or voyageurs. The situation was wild and romantic, in the extreme. Numerous islands studded the surface of the rapid river, dividing the stream into many and diversified channels, through which the waters rushed furiously, in proportion to their width. Wild duck, and water fowl sported joyously over its snowy foam. At one part the banks were covered with luxuriant foliage, at another craggy rocks hung impending over the waters, entwined with lichens of the brightest colors and most varied forms.

The passage of the Long Sault did indeed require, that he who stemmed the perilous rapids should be endowed with strong nerve and powerful arm ; but both of these qualities were conspicuous in Mr. Drummond. Of Herculean strength, he not only speedily became remarkably skilful in paddling his birch canoe, but at last fearlessly took his wife and children in the same frail bark. She was a delicate little creature, clinging with all the depth of a true woman's loving nature to her husband. Their family consisted of four children. The two eldest, a little boy and girl, had been promised by their parents an excursion down the rapids, when the spring ice was entirely dispersed, and they awaited with eager expectation the long-looked-for and much-anticipated pleasure. It came at last.—The first of June was announced by their papa as that on which they would take the proposed trip. Full of glee and joy the happy children retired to rest the previous night, but their slumber was soon broken by a storm, awful in its grandeur, accompanied with thunder and lightning. It was literally a deluge of rain, and lasted for several hours, with a perfect hurricane of wind. The children feared their excursion must be postponed, but to their glad surprise clear and cloudless broke the morning after the storm, nature looking brighter and fresher from its effects.