



CHAPTER II



NATURE ordained that the plateaus of Mount Royal should be the site of a great city. Man's part in the making of Canada's metropolis has been but secondary.

When the surface of the terrestrial globe, cracking and stemming at every joint, took on its present shape, nature provided that half a continent should be commercially tributary to the city which

would be founded about the base of the rocky monument of prehistoric volcanic activity which is the backbone of the beautiful island at the confluence of the Ottawa and the St. Lawrence. The waters drained from the most productive part of the North American Continent, the overflow from the world's greatest inland seas, concentrated into one mighty stream, unite here on their way to the ocean, that ocean which

is the highway to the Old World with its teeming millions. And as if to leave absolutely no question as to the destiny of the northern metropolis, nature here threw great natural barriers—reeching rapids—

across both rivers, defining for all time the limits of ocean navigation.

It is not surprising to learn that even in prehistoric days the site of the present great city was the home of a flourishing community with widespread trade influences.

When the intrepid French navigator, Jacques Cartier, reached Stadacona, the present site of the City of Quebec, in 1535, he heard so much from the natives there about the wealth, comfort and importance of the population living in the great Indian town of Hochelaga that he determined, in spite of all obstacles, to pay the place a visit before returning to France. And he succeeded, thus having the honor to be the first white man to visit the site of the present city, and also its sponsor, for from the name Mount Royal, given by Cartier to the beautiful eminence in the centre of the island, the City of Montreal derives its name.

Hochelaga was, in its own way, a worthy forerunner of the great Dominion's chief city. Possessing a population of 1,500 it was, in many respects, the most remarkable and most important town found by the discoverers of the continent.

The untutored mind of the redneck had grasped some idea of the exceptional advantages of the site of the present city, and the Indians had given to their town an air of substantiality and permanency peculiarly its own. It was surrounded by a triple-walled circular palisade; was laid out on a well regulated and uniform plan, and had well-built houses and even granaries.

If the town was remarkable, so was its population, for it consisted of two races, differing widely in character, tastes and mode of living.