

THE THOUSAND ISLES.

BEAUTIFUL are the scenes which present themselves to your gaze, as, seated on the deck of the steamer, you thread the mazes of this lovely Archipelago. As you are hurried past, what appear to be creeks seem to run far inland, and appear like chains of silver, at the next moment the channel becomes almost a sheet of water, studded with countless islets of a romantic beauty, forming a picture of the rarest delicacy of tone. The Thousand, or the sixteen hundred and forty-three Islands, for such we believe is their number, are situated on the St. Lawrence, between Brockville and Kingston, a distance of about sixty miles. They are of almost every possible size and shape, from the small bare granite rock just jutting its pointed head above the water, to the large fertile island, several miles in extent, covered with fields of grain, the abode of some hardy settler; on some of them there are several farms of considerable extent, and well cultivated.

The islands begin a short distance below Brockville, where three of them, called the Sisters, are ranged side by side, forming a sort of advance guard: above the town they are thickly strewn, for about five or six miles, where the river assumes the appearance of a small open lake, almost wholly free from islands. At the upper extremity of this lake, which is about seven miles long; they begin again, more thickly studded than before, and are found more or less densely crowded together till we reach Kingston. The islands are, for the most part, composed of a sort of soft granite, which in some places presents a very singular contrast to the regular stratified lime-stone found on either side of the river at the same place, offering to the geologist an interesting field of enquiry, while quantities of fish of various kinds found in the eddies and deep channels between them, and numerous flocks of wild fowl of almost every variety, frequenting the sequestered bays and nooks with which they abound, hold out the prospect of a rich treat to the sportsman and naturalist, in the prosecution of their favorite pursuits.

Numerous and romantic are the tales connected with these Islands, and it would well repay the curious in these matters, to collect the various traditions still extant. The ex-

ploits of the celebrated (shall we call him pirate or patriot?) Bill Johnson and his daughter are fresh in the recollection of every one, and may yet furnish material to some future Cooper or James to weave a narrative from.

On the occasion of our last visit to this spot, we were busied in contrasting the scenes before us with those of a more southern clime. These islands, covered with the dark, cold foliage of the evergreens, with the land, which almost looks sprinkled with gold from the flowers of the aloe: the rugged rocks bearing perhaps a single tree or massed into a bowery island, with the shores bordered with sand, on which Amphitrite and her train might love to dance, and weave their flowery locks with the dropping sea weed, while zephyrs come laden to you with the scent of tropical flowers. We were lost in admiration that scenes so dissimilar could yet be both so wonderfully beautiful, when our attention was attracted by a deep sigh breathed near us; turning round we discovered a tall and rather elderly person, of a most particularly melancholy look and with a good deal of the military cut about him. Assuming our blandest expression, we made some remark on the scenery around, and we fell by degrees into a conversation which soon became more and more interesting. On rounding an island and entering a reach of more than usual extent, we inquired of our new acquaintance, who had informed us previously of the deep interest he felt in all around, if he had not a store of legends connected with these islands. "Alas!" was his reply, "the only legend I know is one painfully connected with myself; but perhaps the recital of my griefs may serve to while away the time, and be a warning to you never to surrender yourself to the sweet day-dream of peopling the scenes around you with imaginary beings." He then commenced the following narrative:—

The Lake of the Thousand Isles! Ah! with what delight was it, that Harry Randell and I received leave of absence from our Regiment, then stationed at Kingston, in order that we might spend a fortnight in fishing and shooting among these islands. It was the latter end of October, the Indian summer had set in, the weather was delicious. At early dawn we embarked in our canoe with an Indian guide. The country was then but thinly settled, for it was many, ay, a great many, years ago. A