

UP THE SAGUENAY.

I HAD been slowly melting for two months. Positively I began to be afraid of myself. The mosquitoes were intolerable; so was the dust; so was the cream souting, and the cook asking if skim milk would do for the berries. But what were these annoyances compared to the heat? Something must be done.

I had been reading in the daily papers insinuating advertisements of trips to the far-famed Saguenay, and a disinterested steamboat that would convey travellers thither for the merest song, financially. The Saguenay? Oh glorious! There has always been, I know not what, of charm to me in that name. When I thought of it I felt another being. I became primeval. I wanted to put on a blanket and a pair of moccasins, and get into a canoe. I even thought that a feather or two and a little paint could not be out of the way. Why, the Saguenay was down, down, and away beyond everything; where there was sterility, and that sort of thing; where there were seals and porpoises, and even occasionally something very like a whale. I thought of heat, and dust, and lassitude foregone, and the salt breezes coming up straight into my nostrils from the grand sea; and a determination, not loud but deep, came into my soul that I must achieve this trip, or die the death.

So one morning I went down to the breakfast table, and, finding every one in the most melting mood, seized my opportunity diplomatically, and said I must go to the Saguenay. I cannot put a very fine point on the clatter that obtained at this announcement. It was dreadful. Bedlam was a mere incident in comparison. If I had said that I must "run the blockade," or go to the —, or do something else equally unladylike, I can understand that some such accident as popular prejudice might have operated unfavourably on my family circle, well-regulated although it undoubtedly is. I would have looked for a sensation. I would have been rather mortified if my declaration had been treated as ordinary small talk. But every one goes to the Saguenay; it is quite a common occurrence; and I really saw no indiscretion in the proposal. However, the man in authority over me looked daggers—no, that's effete—mild carving knives at me, from under his beelling brows, for a couple of days, by way of intimidating me from harbouring any such heterodoxy in my gentle breast. It was of course. He remonstrated with me forcibly a few times, and then gave up the point, and filled my purse.

Straightway I packed up my purple and fawn linen, and the next morning found myself at Quebec. I went to see it, thinking of Abraham. And, having seen it, I would say without prejudice, that there is a good deal of getting up stairs in it. Too much; I object to it. There is also a sense of narrowness about the streets that oppresses you. When you go out walking you seem to knock down things with your skirts—like Mrs. Pardiggle. And when you go out driving, you have an odd but undoubtedly humane desire to get out and help the horse who goes up the hills sprawling. As for Wolfe, Abraham and those people, they showed me a few shells, a post or two with a little man stuck on the top thereof, some cannon and a good deal of rock, and I went away and got on board a boat which was making a great deal of noise, and where everybody was saying to everybody else, that if anybody wanted any breakfast he had better make sure of his chair. I immediately sat down on one innocently, and tried to keep from shedding tears of joy, when I found that I had anticipated several hungry looking individuals, who at that moment made a rush for it. However, I was hungry myself. When at last, after we had all waited in our chairs, looking at the table cloth for half an hour or so, the waiters came filing in, and I undertook with an infinite relish three plates full of fresh salmon. The way we used to fight for chairs three times a day after this, and having obtained these, the skirmishes we used to have among the crockery—and the way long armed men used to help themselves to roast beef, and that elderly woman with moustaches would fish pitilessly at the bottom of vegetable dishes for stray beans—and the way the vegetables were cooked when we did get them, and the craving we had for the poultry that never reached us—and the snappishness with which we would pass the omelette, when asked for it, are things to be remembered. I think that we all in common pined for enough. I never sat down to the table without feeling that I would not be satisfied, nor rose from it without knowing that I was not. We used to apologize to

ourselves, by saying it was the cold air, the change in the atmosphere, or the salt water, that did it. In connection with hunger we had cold, which I found out practically, when the captain came and made a general remark that we were in salt water. Of course there was a scene directly. No one could get on deck fast enough. I started up to fly, and upset two old gentlemen. Embarrassed, I went to the other extreme, and they set me. With a thousand blushes, I opened the door, and was immediately met by a whirlwind. It caught me up, and flew about with me, and treated me shamefully. At first I could see nothing for pocket handkerchiefs. Every person was carrying one, and had a cold in his head, and such an absurd blue nose. One is not agreeable with a blue nose—a nose, by all means, of course, that understands itself, as the Germans say. Without a nose, what, for instance, would be the benefit of Lubin's extracts? But I do think that the accident of colour could, as a general thing, be advantageously dispensed with. I tried to distract my attention. I looked at the water, which was a sickly green. I got some, and tasted it—once. I contemplated the scenery, which was lilly. I attempted to be funny with the owner of the elbow which supported me. I even remember making a pun—a bad one. I pretended that I was very happy. But a raw, bleak and humid day on the lower St. Lawrence is not to be defied. I felt that my fate was coming on apace; and I arose with a ghastly smile. The whirlwind playfully laid hold of me again, and hurled me against a judicious number of tripods. These crushed me through the door, and I went and lost myself in "peculiar," quite unmanly for the time.

If you ever go up the Saguenay, I advise you to sit up all night, and see everything for yourself. I didn't. I was snoring beautifully on the top shelf of my stateroom when we entered the river, and did not even dream that anything was happening. When I came out to breakfast I received official notice that we had passed the most interesting scenery during the night, but that the passengers were not to be excited, as we would have an opportunity of seeing everything on our way back. Very good. I was not excited. I yielded myself calmly, and with a certain grace, to circumstances which I could not control. All would have been well if matters had ended here; but they didn't. I went to breakfast, and an elderly unmarried woman, with prominent eyes, came and sat down opposite me impressively, and began to "take on" in the most dreadful way. She had seen the capes, and no one else had! She was triumphant. She actually crowed. She said, in effect, that she had gone to bed and to sleep. Not content with this, as an ordinary woman might have been, she awoke before she had any business to, and straightway had an impulse to poke her night-cap out of the window. And oh! my! there gray and hoar, in the morning twilight, towering up aloft and asserting itself amid the clouds, was a great, big—ah! a thing like a goblin monster, or a giant, or a mountain, "or a—you know," she said indefinitely, right beside the boat! And she thought she was going to faint (if you please). After a while she recovered enough to peep out again; and, good gracious! there was ANOTHER! She never! and neither would we, she told us.

At Ha! Ha! Bay you may observe three things: that there is a blue-tongued, beef-moccasined, short gown and petticoated population, who speak the dear old Cannuck gibberish that your grand Parisian disdain; that you buy little casseaux of blue-berries, and pay four times their value for them; that you can go about, like cattle, on a thousand hills. I clambered up a cone, fancying myself an Ethiopian princess making the ascent of my native pyramid. When I got to the top, my companion apologized, sat down, and lit a cigar. I immediately came out of History, and willily suppressed a sense of wanting to choke. We had been gazing across the bay a good deal, and wondering what was on the other side of the mountains, when we turned round abruptly.

"Is that the steamer's whistle?" said I to him.

"Is that rain?" said he to me.

We were both painfully correct.

Sometime after this, I found myself sitting on a lounge in the cabin, with a confused recollection of having rolled down something and of tumbling over a fence at the bottom; of running some distance in a great hurry and getting mired up hopelessly with horses, carts and cordwood, and of two dripping things sliding over a dirty gangway. I suppose it must have been my companion and myself.

I was still sitting pensive, when everybody began to get up and anticipate and utter exclamations. I asked in my artless way if any one would be good enough to tell me what was the matter. Twenty amiable people said at once that we were coming to the capes, and instantly we all rushed out to see them.

The deck was in a very bad state. It had been raining a good deal; it was still raining a good deal, and as far as one might judge, it intended to go on raining a good deal more. There was a damp, draggled, bespattered look about everything, people who had umbrellas had them up, and people who had none looked upon their neighbours as personal insults. A few women had white pocket-handkerchiefs tied around their heads. There was no curl left in feathers. Straw hats were swollen and blistered. Everyone tried to get the best place, and then as the capes were still some little from us we—paused.

The steamer kept sweeping in nearer to them, and they grow upon us in height and size every moment, until when we were fairly under shadow of one of them, some one (officially) shied two potatoes at it, with the effect of making them appear very small potatoes indeed, by contrast. The rock certainly looks very large; but then why shouldn't it? It is eighteen hundred feet high. People again remarked, that nothing grow upon it. Could we reasonably, and with any degree of certainty look for a crop of cabbages? or even potatoes? I thought not, and, therefore, took the rock calmly, being no poet. There was one beside me, however, with red whiskers, who felt called upon to go off into indefinite raptures. He seemed desirous of making the most of it, and he did. He writhed. He made faces. He said a great deal, and he said it very fast. He brought a good many authors to bear upon it; he quoted ponderous passages from the poets; he even recited modestly a heavy ode of his own. I had an impression of being crushed with soul and awe and nothingness to such a degree, that when he suggested that we should go up to the hurricane deck to get a different view of the cape, I followed him quite feebly. I don't think I shall ever go again. I was first jammed through a narrow passage, then squeezed through a narrower door, then stifled in an apartment so small, that I do not think, even had I felt any inclination for that sort of exercise, that I could have swung a cat there. There was a flight of eight long narrow perpendicular steps, up which the Poet went and pulled me through a hole in the roof, and I found myself on the hurricane deck. Soul, and awe and nothingness was worse than ever, and so was the wind; if I must confess it, I never experienced anything like it. Its searchings and curiosity were really too much. If some one had lashed me to the pipe, I might have borne it; but as it was, I said that I was going down. When I came to the stairs I paused. Would I go first, or would he? The wind gave me little time for reflection. Blindly and despairingly, I let myself down two steps. There was a nail; something caught. The Poet with not quite so much nothingness in his face set me free. I turned round vindictively and pulled down the hatch with a bang! and he got down some other way, (by a ladder, I believe), and went off and rolled about his stateroom in a fine frenzy. He came out after a while with his hair parted in the middle, but I pretended not to see him, and betook myself to musing.

And the steamer swept on through lights, and through shadows, through turmoil and calm into broader waters again, and I turned from the Saguenay, winding like a great black lissom snake between its lonely walls, and set my face homeward and northward as the loadstone to its star. ESPICULE.

HUMAN LIFE.—Hope writes the poetry of the boy, but Memory that of the man. Man looks forward with smiles, but backward with sighs. Such is the wise providence of Heaven. The cup of life is sweeter at the brim, the flavour is impaired as we drink deeper, and the dregs are made bitter that we may not struggle when the cup is taken from our lips.

PHOTOGRAPHING HANDKERCHIEFS.—The idea has been seized upon by a speculative house of business to have handkerchiefs marked with photographs of the owner. The process "will wash." The idea might be extended upon the knob of an umbrella; it would carry conviction at once, and be patent circumstantial evidence against the purloiner.

SIR JOSEPH PAXTON is to have a statue erected to his memory, by subscription, in the gardens of the Crystal Palace, Sydenham, close to the residence where he died.