

Minnie May's Department.

MY DEAR NIECES.—This month I give you a brief description of the annual trip taken by the Ontario Press Association, of which I was a participant. The trip chosen this year was, by the suggestion and kind invitation of our Quebec brethren, to Quebec and the far-famed Saguenay. The party, numbering about one hundred, started down the St. Lawrence from Montreal by steamer, on Tuesday evening, Aug 7th. All was confusion on board at first, until berths were secured and all had partaken of supper. After spending a pleasant evening in renewing the acquaintance of those we met last year, we sought our respective berths. We awoke in time for the lovely view as we neared the quaint old city of Quebec; the sun shone with a warm, yellow light on the Upper Town, while away off to the south and east and west wandered the purple hills and the farm lit plains in such dewy shadow as would have been enough to make the heaviest heart glad. The band which was to accompany us down the Saguenay, was playing cheerfully to welcome us; the members of the Quebec Press Association and their ladies were waiting on the wharf; whilst Mr. Levasseur, the president, read an address of welcome. By his efforts he placed the party under the greatest obligations; having, with Dr. Dionne, the indefatigable secretary, arranged everything for our trip. The attentions of these gentlemen were unremitting, and their genial manners, so full of mirth and vivacity, endeared themselves to all. But it would take too much time and space to mention the names of all that kindly entertained us, and to whom we were indebted for valuable services during the trip, and whose names will never be forgotten. The next step was from the Montreal steamer on to the steamer "Union," which was brought alongside of us to take us down the Saguenay. She was tastefully decorated from bow to stern with evergreens, flags and mottoes of welcome, and the tables, embellished with flowers, were set out with all the substantial of modern civilization—in fact, everything was done that could possibly enhance the pleasures and comforts of our party. By nine o'clock we were off for the Saguenay.

As you leave Quebec, with its mural crowned and castled rock, and drop down the stately river, you are abreast the beautiful Isle of Orleans (21 miles long) whose low shores, with their expanses of farmland, are still as lovely as when the wild grape festooned the primitive forests and won from the easy rapture of old Cartier the name of Isle of Bacchus. Early in the afternoon we reached Murray Bay. The tide, which rises fifteen feet at Quebec, is the impulse, not the savour of the sea; but at Murray Bay the water is salt and the sea bathing lacks nothing but the surf, and hither resort in great numbers the tourists, who fly from their cities during the fierce, brief fever of the northern summer. The sojourners and habitants thronged the pier, as if the arrival of the steamboat was the great event of the day. That afternoon they were in unusual force, having come on foot and by omnibus and *caleche* to witness the arrival of the knights of the quill. Going ashore we were conveyed in *caleches* to the village, about a mile distant, where, in front of one of the large hotels, Judge Routhier read an address of welcome, and after our President, Mr. Tye, had responded, Mr. Cimon, M. P., invited the excursionists to partake of refreshments provided by the people of the parish.

Leaving Murray Bay, our steamer turns southward, and a two hours' voyage brings us to Riviere du Loup, where we make but a short stay and pass on till we reach Tadousac. Here, into the vast, low-walled breadth of the St. Lawrence, a dark stream, narrowly bordered by rounded heights of rocks, steals down from the north, out of regions of gloomy and ever-enduring solitude. This is the Saguenay. It had now grown dark, but we were assured that the next day we should see the beauties of this river on our return trip, so we left the deck and the lights of Tadousac to blink and fail behind us, and entered the saloon and were soon merrily engaged in dancing, singing, card-playing, etc. We were well supplied with music, having the A. Battery band from Quebec on board, also a piano and many good performers. The evening soon sped, and the next morning we found ourselves at Chicoutimi, the head of navigation for

the larger steamships. The long line of sullen hills had fallen away, and the morning sun shone warm on a very lovely landscape. Although it was only seven o'clock when we landed at Chicoutimi, hundreds had come to welcome us, and about seventy covered buckboards were waiting to take us for a drive of twenty-seven miles. We were presented with another address, after which we paid a visit to His Grace Bishop Racine, a pleasant old gentleman at the college. After admiring the fine large church and college, we walked a short distance to the residence of Mr. Gange, M. P., who had provided refreshments for the party prior to their leaving for Grand Brule. We now took the buckboards. These buckboards are very unlike our vehicles of the same name; they have four wheels and a nice covered top, carry four, and are very comfortable rigs; as our drive was a long one only three were allowed in each carriage, for they drive but one horse. The drivers were French Canadians, most of whom could not speak a word of English, and my slight knowledge of the French language was of no avail, as the only answer I could obtain from our driver was a shrug of the shoulder; of course all the French ladies and gentlemen who accompanied us from Quebec could speak English fluently. Our drive was through a very fine part of the country; the roads on either side were grown thick with wild flowers, raspberries and huckleberries, and here I might mention the great amount of huckleberries that grow on the Saguenay, and the peculiar way they are boxed for Quebec, Montreal and places west: they are all shipped in coffin-shaped wooden boxes. At first, on seeing them, I feared they were losing the whole infant population down there, and felt much relieved when I was told they contained huckleberries. After a rather long drive (15 miles) we reached Grand Brule, our halting place for a couple of hours. Here a grand banquet had been prepared, the municipal councils of Chicoutimi and Saguenay having voted a large sum of money for that purpose; there were toasts and speeches, and altogether it was a capital affair, and passed off with enthusiastic enjoyment. Again in the carriages we drove to Ha Ha Ba to meet our boat which had waited there all day. The steamboat wharf was all alive with the tourists and children selling red raspberries and huckleberries in all manner of birch-bark canoes, and goblets and cornucopias. Soon the boat was moving down the river, and every one was alive to the scenery; the procession of the pine-clad, rounded heights on either shore, began shortly after Ha Ha Bay had disappeared behind a curve, and it hardly ceased, save at a point, before the boat entered the St. Lawrence; now and then an island, rugged as the shores, broke the long reaches of the grim river with its massive rock and dark evergreen. But no rocks among all those whose rough and ragged edges repulse the waters which caress them, and whose frowning tops overhang the Saguenay, covering it with their shadows, equal in strange and portentous majesty Capes Trinity and Eternity. The rumor of their approach soon spread among the passengers, and they began to assemble at points favorable for the enjoyment of the spectacle. The sun was fast declining in the western sky, throwing such a delicate, pale light upon the scene. The air was delightful, and all nature seemed happy. Suddenly the boat rounded the corner of the three steps, each over five hundred feet high, in which Cape Trinity climbs from the river. It is sheer rock, sharp edged, cut clear as though done by some mysterious instrument of nature, and stretches upward with a weary, effort-like aspect, for eighteen hundred feet in the air. At the foot of Cape Trinity the water is of unknown depth, and it spreads a black expanse: whilst in the background, where the Capes Trinity and Eternity rear their bare and rugged heads, nestles a small bay in which vessels of all sizes can find shelter. Presently one of the boat's crew placed before the passengers a bucket full of pebbles, and the man said, "Now, see who can hit the cliff. Its further than any of you can throw, though it looks so near," and I was astonished that none could reach it, for it seemed so very close, and suddenly felt an irresistible longing to try my chance. Now, would it not surprise you if I say my pebble struck against the cliff, or even came the nearest? But no, I must adhere to the truth and say it only fell nearest the boat. Here we had a grand echo; the whistle of the steamboat was sounded, a shrill cry awakened and leaped from valley to valley, from ravine to ravine, and ran like a long shiver down the agitated sides, reverberating and rebounding in the hollows, till, softly and gently, it died away in

some narrow hollow in the indistinct distance. Cape Eternity is beside us; it is yet loftier than the sister cliff, but it slopes gently backward from the stream, and from foot to crest it is heavily clothed with a forest of pines. The woods that hitherto have shagged the hills with a stunted and meagre growth, showing long stretches scarred by fire, now assume a stately aspect, and assemble themselves compactly upon the side of the mountain, setting their stems one above another, till the summit is crowned with the mass of dark green plumes. We again soon entered the St. Lawrence. A short stay was made at Tadousac, but we did not leave the boat till we reached Riviere du Loup, about half-past one. We then took carriages for Cacouna, the far-famed watering-place, and put up at the St. Lawrence Hall for the rest of the night. Next morning we drove, after breakfast, to Fraserville and Riviere du Loup, visiting the principal places of interest. After the drive a lunch was served to us in Fraserville, Sir John A. Macdonald being among the guests. The Premier has a summer residence in Cacouna, and usually spends about three months there every year. The luncheon passed off splendidly, notwithstanding the attentions of the French waiters, who served us to everything but what we asked for. I could relate many amusing incidents, but space will not allow. The band played at intervals during luncheon, and toasts and speeches followed. We next went to the station of the Intercolonial Railway, where A. R. McDonald, Esq., Superintendent of the Intercolonial Railway, Riviere du Loup, had a special train in waiting to carry the excursionists to Point Levis. The engine and cars were beautifully decorated with evergreens and gay flags, and as jolly a party as ever travelled were soon rolling along at the rate of sixty miles an hour. At the Chaudiere Junction or Curve, we were kindly given a dinner by the railway authorities. From there we rode a short distance further to Point Levis, opposite Quebec. We crossed on the ferry, and entered dear old Quebec about nine o'clock Friday night, August 10th. On our grand reception in that city and Montreal, I will dwell next month.

MINNIE MAY.

The Saguenay River.

There is a wild Canadian land
The Saguenay pours out its tide —
A dark, tumultuous, savage stream,
Whose boiling, raging currents glide
With matchless speed and sullen roar
Downward to ocean's rock-bound shore.

With eddying whirl, with sudden shoot
Its fathomless abyss sweep,
Now o'er a hidden shoal or bar,
Now o'er gigantic ledges deep;
So, ever with a pallid haste
The seaboy speeds across its waste.

Dark tales, weird tales, of wreck,
Of woeful horrors, men relate,
Of its immeasurable depths,
Of great ships hurried to their fate
Of dangerous rocks, where tempest-tost
Brave men were in vast whirlpools lost!

So with stern awe the seamen pass
Within the iron-bound headland's sweep,
That guard the portals of the stream,
A granite gateway to the deep.
Across its tides are shimmering mists,
Huge, spectral phantoms, gray and grim,
That hang like shadows o'er the cliffs,
And over gulch and gorges swim.

Fierce, gushing winds expand their wing
Cold as the blasts of Arctic shores;
They shake the solid granite walls
And the lone pine that o'er them soars
The place is like some funeral vault,
For all is barren, wild and bleak,
The inky waters dusky still
With shadows of the soaring peak.

On either hand two rugged capes.
Grim Trinity, Eternity!
In savage grandeur seem to frown
On sailing ship and weltering sea;
Little of verdurous life may cast
A smiling bloom across their side
Nor birch nor fir may drape the cliff,
Or cascade plunge its foamy tide,
For all its awful solitude,
Boom Nature in her fiercest mood!

ISAAC McLELLAN.