

And, truly, it was well worth the seeking, that fair, too long neglected gem in Nature's coronet, the distant land over the Western sea. Cultivation has no doubt done much for the Canada of Francis I., still even in the undeveloped beauty of those remote days, its natural features were strikingly fine. Prominent then, as now, was the noble river flowing through its midst—its own beautiful St. Lawrence, "the river of Canada," as the French sometimes styled it by pre-eminence; a recognised monarch\* in the world of waters, embracing in its wide-spread dominion, rapids and cataracts, and tributary streams, with vast lakes like seas, and a little world of islands like fairy realms,† the whole enclosed within romantic shores, worthy to form the framing of so magnificent a picture.

Then, as now, the valley of the St. Lawrence was rich in every variety of natural beauty, but with this difference, that at the arrival of the French the superb panorama was more or less enveloped in an apparently interminable forest, to which the predominance of the pine imparted in some places an air

\* "The St. Lawrence has a course of nearly three thousand miles, and varies in breadth from one mile to ninety miles. It annually discharges to the ocean about 4,277,880 millions of tons of fresh water, of which 2,112,120 millions of tons may be reckoned melted snow—the quantity discharged before the thaw comes on being 4,512 millions of tons per day for 240 days, and the quantity after the thaw begins being 25,560 millions per day for 125 days, the depths and velocity when in and out of flood being duly considered."—*Martin's British Colonies*.

† Among others, the Thousand Islands, happily described as "picturesque combinations of wood, rock, and water, such as imagination is apt to attach to the happy islands in the Vision of Mirza."