

CANADIAN ESSAYS.

THE GATINEAU VALLEY.

BY JOSEPH K. FORAN.

IN one gigantic stride we pass from the Rock of Cashel to the Hills of the Gatineau. At the request of some friends we resolved to take this step for the present essay. The reason is obvious. To-day a question of most vital importance for the people of this region is upon the *tapis*, and now is the time when each and all the friends of the new railway enterprise should come forward and lend their helping hand to the advancement of so good, so noble, so patriotic, and so grateful a cause.

People who dwell in the eastern and western portions of Canada have no idea of the country that lies between the ridges of the Laurentian range from the Lievere to the Gatineau. They must come, and with their own eyes see the land, meet the people, examine the hills, explore the valleys, before they can imagine the remotest picture of what the reality is.

On Monday, the tenth of October, a party of engineers, surveyors, etc., left Ottawa for the village of Maninoki, which is at the union of the rivers Desert and Gatineau, some 85 miles from the Capital, there to commence operations and trace a line for the "Gatineau Valley Railway."

While these parties are so engaged in the first steps so necessary in such an enterprise, we will strive, in a few lines, to give a short account of a trip up the Gatineau—or rather to give an idea of what the country is celebrated for.

It is, without a doubt, a romantic and wild region—fertile, rich, and beautiful. But, first of all, we would remark that it is a *most hospitable* country. From Chelsea to the Desert, stop where you will, you will ever find an open house, a smiling face, a cheerful host, a good meal and a comfortable bed to greet and invite you. Leave Ottawa in the morning, just at dawn, and drive along slowly until you find yourself at the top of the first Chelsea hill; there pause to contemplate the approach of morning, as the herald rays glimmer in the far east and illumine by degrees the purple hills that sublimely

tower above each other until they blend with the distant sky. On through Chelsea and past the cascades until you reach the mouth of the Le Peche river. You are by this time anxious for dinner. The road along is splendidly gravelled and macadamized, the scenery is gorgeous but very wild. You see before naught but frowning hills, until all at once, as you round a projecting rock beneath you, on the shore of a silvery bay lies the village of the Peche. Thence you proceed through the rest of Wakefield, and Lowe, and Aylwin, until you find yourself in the township of Wright. Stag Creek is behind you; you have crossed the Kazubozna (more properly called the Kazupissua, signifying *a little sound under*), and finally you see the wild and dark hills that flank the Pickanock. Joshua Ellard's place is left behind, Victoria farm is past, and you are in the pretty village of Wright.

Thence you proceed some twenty-eight miles through Bauchette until you reach the line that marks at once the township of Maninoki and the Indian reserve. Here you come into a vast and fertile tract of level land. All of this land is the property of the sons of the forest. As you approach Maninoki, your way lies along a semi-circle of hills. Far to the north are the mountains of the eagle, and you see the slopes through which the desert and Gatineau sweep, until they meet at your feet. Upon the top-most rock that o'erhangs the river stands a magnificent cut stone church, built by the Rev. Fathers of the Oblate Order. The statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary upon its summit is on a level with the highest mountain of the range. (Maninoki means the village or town of Mary). Unfortunately a few weeks ago this beautiful statue was shattered by the lightning. Beneath you the village stretches off, terrace over terrace, and in the valley beneath, you "may tell by the smoke that so gracefully curls above the tall elms" a wigwam is near. Tent after tent is seen in the nooks and corners of the sloping land. Perchance