

## UP THE SAGUENAY TO HA-HA BAY AND CHICOUTIMI.

Perhaps there are few among the pleasure seekers of the day, who are aware of the exceeding grandeur and picturesque beauty of that most wonderful of rivers, the Saguenay. Certainly there can be nothing more refreshing to the thinking man, nothing affording more food for reflection or scientific observation, than a trip over its inky waters. For perfect wildness and grandeur of scenery, there is probably nothing equal to it on this continent. It is a river which one should see, if only to observe what dreadful aspects nature can assume in her wildest moods. The effect produced upon the mind in passing from the broad St. Lawrence, reaching on, on as far as the eye can see, into the narrow and fearfully deep Saguenay, whose waters have the sides of the towering rocks, which rise on either side, and almost shut out the very light of heaven, is such as no pen can paint, or tongue describe.

As the tourist suddenly passes from a landscape of such remarkable beauty, into a region of primitive grandeur, where art has done nothing, and nature everything, "where," to quote the words of a noted writer, "at a single bound, civilization is left behind, and nature, in naked majesty, stares him in the face, when he sees Alps on Alps arise, when he floats over unfathomable depths through a mountain gorge, the sublime entirely overwhelms the senses of sight, and fascinates the imagination."

There can be little doubt that at some remote period, these massive granite walls were rent asunder by some great convulsion of nature, and thus this wonderful river forced a passage to the St. Lawrence.

In fact the aborigines regarded it as the entrance to a "region of death and demons;" and when Jacques Cartier first attempted to explore its windings in 1535, the seamen drew back in terror, refusing to enter its gloomy depths: they believed that the Great Spirit in his anger had torn the mountains asunder, drained an immense lake in the far north, leaving its bed an oozy marsh, and so formed the passage of the Saguenay.

This river is the principal outlet of Lake St. John, a sheet of water about forty miles long; its waters are remarkably clear, and abound in a great variety of fish. There is a most beautiful curtain-fall, 236 feet high, into this lake, which is so conspicuous as to be seen forty or fifty miles distant.

The river is only half a mile in width for the first half of its course, and runs through an almost untroubled wilderness, abounding in falls and rapids, but it gradually widens, till near its mouth it is about three miles wide. The original name of the Saguenay was Chicoutimi, signifying "Deep Waters," and black and deep they certainly are, varying from a hundred to a hundred and fifty fathoms in depth, nearly the

whole way. A few miles below Lake St. John is the little village of Chicoutimi, which is the highest point navigable for steamboats, as there is a range of rapids above it, which extends ten miles up to the lake. The Indians say there is a subterranean fall above the foot of the rapids, which they call Manitou or "Great Spirit."

The village has an ancient appearance, and lies back among the bleak rocks and barren hills, a desolate picture indeed!

The only object of interest is a rude Catholic church, said to have been founded by the Jesuits at a very early period. In the belfry hangs a clear toned bell with an inscription upon it, which has never yet been translated or expounded. But the great resort of the tourist is Grand, or Ha-Ha Bay.

The name of this bay is said to have arisen from the circumstance of early French navigators sailing up the river for sixty miles, with eternal sameness of the feature, grim and lofty rocks, on which they could not land, and no bottom for their anchors, till at last upon finding themselves in this beautiful bay, they broke out laughing, "Ha-Ha," when they found landing and anchorage. The village lay smiling in the sunshine, as we sailed into the bay, on that summer's afternoon.

There is a church there; and about one hundred and fifty families reside in the two villages that follow the crescent beach. The wharf was a busy scene as we landed; the *habitants* had turned out *en masse* to witness the arrival of the boat, the one exciting event of the day and were gesticulating and vociferating wildly in their barbarous *patois*, making a perfect Babel. As we returned to the boat, after our *promenade en cointure* over the hills, we noticed a long procession of boatmen marching on board with the inevitable "huckleberries,"—six hundred coffin-shaped wooden boxes. At first we could not imagine what all those queer looking boxes contained, but upon being enlightened by one of the men, I fully sympathized with Col. Ellison in "A Chance Acquaintance," when upon a similar occasion he expressed a fear that Ha-Ha Bay was being depleted of its entire infant population.

Leaving Ha-Ha Bay, and sailing down the river to the St. Lawrence, a distance of sixty miles, we have the grandest scenery; penetrating through a mountainous tract of syenite granite, with walls of perpendicular rocks, rising from a thousand to eighteen hundred feet above the surface of the water. It is an awful sight, as we raise our eyes heavenward, to look up at those massive granite rocks, towering majestically above our heads, and in some places almost shutting out the light of day. And now we come to the great attractions of the Saguenay, Cape Eternity and Trinity Rock. If the only recompense for a visit to this remarkable river were a sight of these stupendous promontories, I feel sure no one would

be disappointed. There is a grandeur and sublimity about them which is perfectly indescribable. It was at night when we first passed these gigantic cliffs, and as we dimly made out their forms in the deepening obscurity, the land seemed enchanted and unreal, and we felt as if we were travelling into a region of unknown wonders. But upon our return trip we had the bright afternoon sun, and as we bade adieu to Ha-Ha Bay, and commenced the descent of the river, we began, as if by instinct, to strain our eyes, that we might get the first glimpse of all the magnificent natural grandeur that now burst upon our view. The vessels shut off steam as they approach these points, and, as the boat turned her prow into the lonesome Bay of Eternity—creeping into the grim shadows—and lay to under those towering cliffs, that lifted their threatening heads full eighteen hundred feet above us, we looked up at the "measureless mass," that seemed to swing and sway overhead, and our nerves trembled with the same terror that besets him who looks downward from the verge of a lofty precipice.

The wonderful Gothic arch was pointed out to us, the reputed doorway of an unexplored cavern, under which an upright shaft of stone had stood for ages, statue-like, till not many winters ago, the frost heaved it from its foundation, and it plunged headlong down through the ice into the unfathomed depths below.

The boat whistle was blown, and the canon fired to awaken the echoes that answer from Trinity Rock, and reply from its "mighty mate," Cape Trinity, on the other side of the bay, and then we sailed away from their gloomy shade towards the broad St. Lawrence. The water is very deep in the vicinity of these promontories; in some places it is over twelve hundred feet, and owing to the height of the overhanging cliffs, it assumes a black and inky appearance. Then we saw the bald-headed eagle, the salmon leaping from the water after its prey, and porpoises and seals bobbing up and down.

It was just at nightfall that we came in sight of Tadoussac upon our return. The sun was setting as we sailed out of the gloomy depths of the Saguenay into the beautiful bay that lay stretched out before us, and the sky and the river were one blaze of crimson, purple, and gold, while just over the tops of the dark trees, appeared the full orbed moon; the front of the wood was buried in shadow, but a bridge of silver spanned the gulf, and the hither shore was flooded in light. It was one of the grandest sights I ever beheld. Even yet the beauty of that scene lingers in my memory and fills me with perfect delight, and with the hope that sometime perhaps, I may see it again.

The bay of Tadoussac is just at the entrance to the Saguenay, and here it is that that dark narrow stream "steals down from the north out of regions of gloomy and ever enduring solitude"

into the vast St. Lawrence.

The return boat from Quebec was just starting on its trip up the river as we entered the bay; and as we watched it sail through the moonlight—past the two giant cliffs that stand like sentinels, keeping guard at the portals of this strange river—into the dim obscurity beyond, it seemed in its turn to be hastening, over a pathway of silver, into some weird world of mysteries and wonders.

The bay of Tadoussac is picturesque beyond description; and there, amid frowning hills and wild scenery, nestled the village with its odd little cottages, its grand hotel, and Lord Dufferin's charming villa, looming up before our astonished vision, like some fairy palace; and, last but not least, the little church, over three hundred years old, which Mr. Howell has so graphically described. There it stands, conspicuous in its old-fashioned simplicity, between the hotel and Lord Dufferin's villa. There the light is ever burning, still keeping its weary vigil all night after night, for nearly three hundred years, and seeming doubly sacred from its antiquity.

Tadoussac is also interesting to the traveller from the fact of its having been, from a very early period, the capital of the French settlements, and one of their chief fur-trading posts; and here, too, once stood the first stone and mortar building ever erected in America—the home of Father Marquette. A cluster of pine trees over two hundred years old has grown from the centre of these historical ruins.

On our return trip we stopped at Cacouna, Riviere du Loup, and Murray Bay; all of them first class watering places of the Lower St. Lawrence. And here congregate most of the fashionable of Montreal and Quebec, many of whom spend the entire season at these resorts. There are excellent hotels at both Cacouna and Murray Bay, where every accommodation can be found, billiard-rooms, bathing-houses, and sailing boats kept ready for the use of visitors. At Cacouna the water is quite salt, and the sea bathing lacks nothing but the surf; but at Murray Bay, as at Quebec, the tide which rises over 15 feet, is the impulse, not the savour of the sea. We found Cacouna a most enjoyable spot in which to pass the hot summer days, and the week spent at Murray Bay, I shall always look back upon with pleasure. The pleasant hotel with its broad verandas, and shady lawns, filled with a gay party of pleasure-seekers; the light, airy toilets of the ladies; the fantastic costume of the gentlemen; their straw hats decked with white muslin scarfs, or blue gauze veils, which were supposed to be worn for the purpose of protecting the back of the neck from the glare of the sun; the moonlight rambles by the river; the sail in the Indian canoes, and the difficulty experienced in getting into them without upsetting; the rides over the hills in the primitive