

THREE RIVERS.

[WITH AN ENGRAVING.]

WE have pleasure in presenting to the readers of the *Garland* a view of the Town of Three Rivers, copied from an engraving originally published in Bartlett's "Canadian Scenery." In connexion with it we give an extract from a letter of Charlevoix, written about one hundred and thirty years since, showing what Three Rivers then was. It has not made so much progress as from its importance in the early history of Canada might have been expected. It is however, a busy and well peopled town, and must always be a place of great interest to the traveller, who will find in its neighbourhood some of the most beautiful scenery and romantic falls which this country, rich as it is in grandeur and beauty, presents to the eye. The lover of the majestic and picturesque will find himself richly repaid by a visit to it. In a former number of the *Garland*, a graphic description was given of some of the most striking features, in a paper called "A Cruise up the Black River,"—one of the three from which it derives its name:

"After embracing the missionary at Beckan-court, visiting his canton, and making with him melancholy reflections on the inevitable consequence of the disorder I have been mentioning, and for which he is often under the necessity of making his moan before the Lord, I crossed the River Saint Lawrence, in order to get to this town. Nothing, Madam, can possibly exceed the delightfulness of its situation. It is built on a sandy declivity, on which there is just barren ground sufficient to contain the town, if ever it come to be a large place; for at present it is far from being considerable. It is, moreover, surrounded with every thing that can contribute to render a place at once rich and pleasant. The river, which is near half a league over, washes its foundations. Beyond this, you see nothing but cultivated lands, and those extremely fertile, and crowned with the noblest forests in the universe. A little below, and on the same side with the town, the Saint Lawrence receives a fine river, which, just before it pays the tribute of its own waters, receives those of two others, one on the right, and the other on the left, from whence this place has the name of the Three Rivers.

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"They reckon but about seven or eight hundred souls on the Three Rivers; but it has in its

neighbourhood sufficient wherewithall to enrich a great city. There is exceeding plentiful iron mines, which may be made to turn to account whenever it is judged proper.* However, notwithstanding the small number of the inhabitants in this place, its situation renders it of vast importance, and it is also one of the most ancient establishments in the colony. This post has always, even from the most early times, had a governor. He has a thousand crowns salary, with an *Etat Major*. Here is a convent of Recollets, a very fine parish church, where the same fathers officiate, and a noble hospital adjoining to a convent of Ursuline nuns, to the number of forty, who serve the hospital. This is also a foundation of M. de St. Vallier. As early as the year 1650, the seneschal, or high steward of New France, whose jurisdiction was absorbed in that of the supreme council of Quebec, and of the intendant, had a lieutenant at the Three Rivers; at this day, this city has an ordinary tribunal for criminal matters, the chief of which is a lieutenant-general.

"This city owes its origin to the great course of Indians, of different nations, at this place in the beginning of the colony. There resorted to it chiefly, several from the most distant quarters of the north, by way of the Three Rivers, which have given this city its name, and which are navigable a great way upwards. The situation of the place, joined to the great trade carried on at it, induced some French to settle here, and the nearness of the River Sorel, then called the Iroquois River, and of which I shall soon take notice, obliged the governors-general to build a fort here, where they kept a good garrison, and which at first had a garrison of its own. Thus, this post was henceforwards looked upon as one of the most important places in New France. After some years, the Indians, weary of the continual ravages of the Iroquois, and from whom the French themselves had enough to do to defend themselves, and the passes being no longer free, in which those Indians lay in ambush, and finding themselves hardly secure, even under the cannon of our fort, they left off bringing their furs."

* They are now effectually working them, and they produce some of the best iron in the world.