

VIII.—*The Valley of the Grand River, 1600-1650.*

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(Read May 25, 1898.)

The western branch of River St. Lawrence was first known as "River of the Algonquins," and by the end of the 17th century it was called "the route of the Outaouas," but the designation of "Grand River" covers the whole of that period, even the 18th century and part of our own time; it is therefore the fit term to be used when speaking of that river and valley during the early days of Canada.

## FIRST NOTION OF THE GRAND RIVER.

On the 3rd day of October, 1535, Cartier ascended the Mountain of Montreal and found that the St. Lawrence made a fork above that place, one branch coming from the south through a series of cascades, and the other one flowing from the west, without any apparent obstacle. He attached a great importance to the latter branch—which we now know as the Ottawa—because he expected to discover in that direction the fabulous kingdom of the Saguenay, which in his imagination existed somewhere between the Ottawa, the North Pole and Lake St. John on the Saguenay River.

The two Indians from Gaspé who had accompanied him to the mouth of the Saguenay during the preceding summer, had obtained from the people of Tadoussac some information concerning the Upper Saguenay, but they all made a mistake regarding the course and the directions of the waters running through that back country. Cartier wrote in his diary that the route of the Saguenay led to a rich kingdom which had an outlet in the west by means of another great river. When in Montreal, he fully believed that the Ottawa was that highway and his ambition grew in consequence. Unfortunately he could not utilize his Algonquin interpreters, because the tribe of Hochelaga (Montreal) spoke the Huron language only. He, therefore, had to resort to sign and pantomime to communicate with the Indians of that place. This made the matter worse, as he was already impressed with the idea that the kingdom of the Saguenay existed in that neighbourhood; he readily inferred from the gestures and signs of the savages that in the river before his eyes he had found the very door of that so-called wealthy region, and furthermore, that after navigating that stream to its sources he would reach Japan and China in a short journey.

In the autumn of 1885, 350 years later, the first locomotive of the Canadian Pacific Railway started on its trip across the continent.