

The great stream, which forms the main boundary between the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, was called in early times the River of the Ottawas; but, it might have been named, also, the River of the Hurons. Owing to its geographical position, it offered the advantages of a direct and convenient highway between the French settlements on the St. Lawrence and the Indian tribes of the Great Lakes. This river, especially in the seventeenth century, was traversed by Algonkins and Hurons, Frenchmen and priests, following, either along its shores or at its distant terminals, their varied pursuits of explorers, fur-traders, scalp-hunters or ministers of the gospel. Sometimes, huge fleets of canoes, bearing red embassies from the west, or white punitive expeditions from the east, consignments of furs to the St. Lawrence trading posts, or native supplies for the winter hunt, black robed Jesuits with *donnés* or artisans for their western missions, passed up or down this great highway; while, at other times, fugitive parties, both white and red, crept along the shadow of its shores to avoid some scalping-party of the ubiquitous and dreaded Iroquois.

We are thus indebted to historical testimony for much of our knowledge of what took place on the Ottawa, since the beginning of the French régime. We should now endeavor to amplify this knowledge, by the accumulation of such data as may be derived from the domain of archaeology. The prospects in this direction, though somewhat dubious at first sight, are much improved upon closer acquaintance.

It is no great tax upon our ingenuity to discover traces of the presence of French and Indians on the Ottawa, in bygone times. The Indian dictum that, "water leaves no trail," applies, only to the deeper parts of the stream; for the writer, has in his collection, stone tomahawks of native manufacture, together with trade bullets, which were taken from the shallow shore-water of this river. It is, however, in the ancient camping grounds, which dot the shores of the Ottawa at frequent intervals, that we should search for traces of early human occupation. As the recovery of the loose leaves, which have been lost out of some old story book, is necessary to complete the tale; so is the interpretation of the sign language of these camp-sites, a requisite for the recovery of many lost or unwritten pages of our historical manuscript.

Great care should be taken in the examination of these places. The ground should be all gone over on the hands and knees, as, with his nose to the ground, so to speak, one is not liable to overlook anything of importance. As he is about to turn up a chapter on the social and domestic life of a native community, he should observe the topographical features of the