

PICTURESQUE CANADA.

and from which her adventurous children set forth—long-robed missionaries leading the way, trappers and soldiers following—until they had established themselves at every strategic point on the St. Lawrence, the Great Lakes, the Ohio, and the Mississippi from the Falls of St. Anthony to New Orleans, must always have historical and poetic significance. The city and the Province which for the next hundred and twenty years have remained French in appearance and French to the core, yet have fought repeatedly and are ready to fight again side by side with the red-coats of Great Britain—the best proof surely that men can give of loyal allegiance;—which preserve old Norman and Breton customs and traits, and modes of thought and faith that the Revolution has submerged in the France of their fore-fathers, fondly nursing the seventeenth century in the lap of the nineteenth, must, perhaps beyond any other spot in North America, have an interest for the artist and the statesman.

In the sixteenth century the gallant Francis I. made seven attempts to give France a share in that wonderful New World which Columbus had disclosed to an unbelieving generation, but like his attempts in other directions they came to nothing. In 1535 he put three little vessels under the orders of Jacques Cartier, a skilful navigator, a pious and brave man, well worthy of the patent of nobility which he afterwards received, instructing him to proceed up the broad water-way he had discovered the year before, until he reached the Indies. His duties were to win new realms for Mother Church, as a compensation for those she was losing through Lutheran and Calvinistic heresies, and to bring back his schooners full of yellow gold and rosy pearls. Thus would his labours redound to the glory of God and the good of France. Jacques Cartier crossed the ocean and sailed up the magnificent water-way, piously giving to it the name of the saint on whose fête-day he had first entered its wide-extended portals. For hundreds of miles the river kept its great breadth, more like a sea than a river, till the huge bluff of Quebec, seen from afar, appeared to close it abruptly against farther advance. By means of this bluff thrust into the stream and the opposite point of Levis stretching out to meet it, the view is actually narrowed to three quarters of a mile. Coasting up between the north shore and a large beautiful island, he came, on the 14th of September, to the mouth of a little tributary, which he called the Ste. Croix, from the fête celebrated on that day. Here he cast anchor, for now the time had come to land and make inquiries. It needed no prophet to tell that the power which held that dark red bluff would hold the key to the country beyond. The natives, with their chief Donnacona, paddled out in their birch-bark canoes to gaze upon the strange visitants who had—in great white-winged castles—surely swooped down upon them from another world. Cartier treated them kindly. They willingly guided him through the primeval forest to their town on the banks of the little river, and to the summit of the rock under the shadow of which they had built their wigwams. What a landscape for an explorer to gaze upon! Shore and forest bathed in the mellow light of the September sun for forty miles up and down both sides of