

nature in its untainted loveliness? But no; the individual I have mentioned had but one motto, "Excelsior"—one aim, "Chicoutimi," and to that end the manager was interviewed. "Chicoutimi, by to-morrow-night, or in time to catch the boat early the next morning, impossible!" "The line is all out of order; the distance is 75 miles, and takes two days to drive." But on urgent representations being made, we are told that he will see us again about it in half an hour. At the expiration of that time we are summoned to a conference with the driver, who professes his ability to enable us to catch the steamer at Chicoutimi early the second morning, but in order to do so counsels starting that night, say at ten o'clock. One of the party seems to favor this proposal, but in this instance is overruled and a start arranged for at 5.30 the following morning, preceded by breakfast; so nine o'clock being none too early to turn in with such a prospect, we retired to as comfortable rooms and beds as it is possible for hotels to provide. To look out at 5 A.M. and see every indication of a wet day; to know that you have a 75 mile drive before you, and that you must get up at once, is not pleasant. Here, for the first time, let it be recorded, that for half-an-hour or thereabouts—not to be too exact—it was a toss up whether one of the party would not have been informed that if he wanted to take that drive he could do so alone, for as for another of the party, he preferred staying where he was; what really decided it was the fact that there was no train leaving before the next night, which meant two whole days in the hotel. If it was going to be wet, one would be as well driving as doing nothing there; and so the original arrangement was carried out, one of the party never knowing how near he was to not seeing Chicoutimi after all.

The sun is shining, rather waterly it is true, but still, brightly enough, as we turn briskly down the drive of the hotel in a covered buckboard, behind two spirited little Canadian horses: the driver seems hopeful, the roads are good and dry, and as we cover the first 14 miles in an hour and twenty minutes, a drive to Chicoutimi in one day seems a very small affair, hardly worth talking about.

As we go through Chambord, a small rain begins to fall, and the wind to blow gustily from a bad quarter; very soon the rain has its effect on the roads, and they are covered with a layer of rather adhesive mud, which sticks to the wheels and plentifully besprinkles buckboard and occupants. The country gets flat and uninteresting; the road stretches before us in pitiless monotony, only relieved by the almost perpendicular descent into and ascent from the deep gullies which cross it every few miles. The habitants' houses, which are dotted here and there alongside it, look utterly dreary and wretched in the wide, almost treeless expanse of country, with the driving air sweeping across it, looking all the worse