

## DISCOVERY OF BURLINGTON BAY.

cross poles extended between, for hanging the funeral gifts and the remains of the dead.

We were lodged in a large bark house where more than a hundred of these bundles of mortality were hanging from the rafters. Amidst the throng of the living and the dead we spent a night which the imagination and the senses conspired to render almost insupportable. At length the officiating chiefs gave the signal to prepare for the ceremony. The relics were taken down, opened for the last time, and the bones caressed and fondled by the women amid paroxysms of lamentations. Then all the processions were formed anew, and, each bearing its dead, moved towards the area prepared for the last solemn rites. As they reached the ground they defiled in order, each to a spot assigned to it. Here the bearers of the dead laid their bundles on the ground. Fires were now lighted, kettles slung, and around the entire circle of the clearing the scene was like a fair or caravansary. This continued till three in the afternoon, when the gifts and bones were repacked. Suddenly, at a signal from the chiefs, the crowd ran forward from every side towards the scaffold, scaled it by rude ladders, and hung their relics and gifts to the forest of poles which surmounted it. Then the ladders were removed, and a number of chiefs standing on the scaffold harangued the crowd below, while other functionaries were lining the grave throughout with rich robes of beaver skin. Three large copper kettles were next placed in the middle and then ensued a scene of hideous confusion. The bodies which had been left entire were brought to the edge of the grave, flung in and arranged in order at the bottom by ten or twelve Indians stationed there for that purpose, amid the wildest excitement and the uproar of many hundred mingled voices. When this part of the work was done night was fast closing in. The concourse bivouacked around the clearing and lighted their camp fires under the brows of the forest which hedged in the scene. We withdrew to the village, when an hour before dawn we were aroused by a terrible clamor. One of the bundles of bones, tied to a pole on the scaffold, had chanced to fall into the grave. This accident precipitated the closing act and perhaps increased its frenzy. Guided by the unearthly din, and the broad glare of flames, fed with heaps of fat pine logs, we soon reached the spot and saw what seemed to us an image of pandemonium. All around blazed countless fires, and the air resounded with discordant outcries.

The naked multitude, on, under and around

the scaffold were flinging the remains of their dead, pell mell into the pit, where we discovered men who, as the ghastly shower fell around them, arranged the bones in their places with long poles. All was soon over; earth, logs and stones were cast upon the grave, and the clamor subsided into a funeral chant, dreary and lugubrious."

Such was the origin of those numerous and strange sepulchres which have been the wonder and perplexity of the early settlers of the county of Simcoe, similar in every respect to the one at Lake Medad where stood the Iroquois village visited by La Salle as before mentioned in the year 1669.

Briefly in closing I might add, that La Salle finding the season far advanced, and seeing before him the uninviting prospect of a winter camp in the woods, parted from the Sulpicians at Otinaoutawa after solemn mass and probably returned to Montreal. We hear of him nine years later, in company with Father Hennepin, building the "Griffin" above the Falls of Niagara, the first schooner which floated on Lake Erie.

The missionaries having parted from La Salle, left Otinaoutawa on the 1st. October with their retinue, accomplished the remainder of the portage to the Grand river, which they reached about Galt, and descended its difficult and tortuous channel. In fourteen days they reached its mouth and encamped on the northern shore of Lake Erie, which they describe as a "vast sea tossed by tempestuous winds." They built a camp for the winter at or near the mouth of the river and employed their time in hunting game and drying the flesh of the larger animals for subsistence on their journey. To this they added 70 bushels of nuts of various kinds, and apples, plums and grapes, (all wild of course.) They spent the winter at this place, and six months afterwards on March 23d 1670 they erected a cross bearing the arms of Louis XIV of France, and took formal possession of the country in the name of that king. Three days afterwards they resumed their voyage to the west, and while encamped upon Long Point a violent gale in the night arose, destroying the contents of one of their canoes. They deplored the loss of their powder and lead, but most of all of their holy chapel, without which the Eucharist could not be celebrated. They proceeded onward, however, through Lake Erie, Detroit river, and Lake Huron even to Sault de Ste. Marie, but becoming discouraged returned thence to Montreal by way of the French and Ottawa rivers. An immense distance truly to be paddled in open canoes.