

It will be seen from the foregoing that the worthy doctor had witnessed the excavation of a small ossuary, bone-pit or communal grave, such as are found in the Huron country in western Ontario. When the doctor raises the question as to whether the bodies had not all been "thrown indiscriminately into one pit at the same time," he suggests a mode of sepulture that was actually observed by Brébeuf at the Huron Feast of the Dead at Ossossané in 1636.

Ossuary on Aylmer Island.—Another small ossuary was uncovered some years ago, on Aylmer Island, called also Lighthouse Island, in Lake Deschênes, when the foundation for the new lighthouse was being excavated. The writer was not present at the exhumation of its contents, but the light-keeper, Mr. Frank Boucher, informed him that the skeletons were all piled together, indiscriminately. It is difficult to estimate the number of bodies interred in this grave, but it yielded about a wagon load of bones. No entire skulls were found but the writer observed that the teeth in all the jawbones were sound, in some cases being worn down quite flat without the least sign of decay. Some single graves have also been found on this island. The presence of this ossuary is also at once suggestive of the celebration, on Aylmer Island, of the weird mortuary rite called the Feast of the Dead.

Embowered in the solemn grandeur of a mighty forest of gloomy pines, old Lac Chaudière—our Lake Deschênes—was a fitting theatre for that weird ceremonial. Resting on the old Algonkin camping ground at Pointe aux Pins—now Queen's Park—some roving *coureur de bois* might have seen this great sheet of water fading away into the vast green ocean of foliage to the south, and witnessed from his point of vantage the uncanny incidents of the savage drama. From various points on the lake he might have seen, converging on the island, great war canoes freighted with the living and the dead, the sad remnants of a passing race. He might have heard the long drawn-out wailing cries of the living, as they floated out across the water, outrivalling the call of the loon, or the dismal and prolonged howl of the wolf, as they echoed through the arches of the forest; and, as the island rose before his vision, tenanted with its grotesque assemblage of dusky forms, engaged in the final rite of sepulture, he might have mused upon the mutability of human life, in its application to the red denizens of the wilderness, whether in the extinction of a clan, or the dissolution of a tribe or confederation.

But where, to-day, are these people whose reverence for their dead was one of the first rays of light stealing in upon their darkness from the coming morning of a new day? Who felt even in the wind as it played over their brows when spent with toil the caress of a good spirit? Who, longing for that which they knew not, made gods of the blind forces of nature and reached out to them, in their direst need, for assistance and consolation? Did they migrate, finally, to join their kindred in their distant resting places? Did they fade away, by adoption, into other tribes? Or, were they absorbed by the red cloud of massacre, to disappear forever in the darksome shadow of the illimitable wilderness?