

DISCOVERY OF BURLINGTON BAY.

people leaped with joy to witness the contortions which the severity of the heat caused in the poor sufferer.

While these events were transpiring, I retired to the cabin where we lodged full of sorrow at not being able to save the poor captive, and it was then that I realized, more than ever, the importance of not venturing too far among the people of this country, without knowing their language, or being certain of obtaining an interpreter.

As I was in my cabin, praying to God, and very sad, M. de La Salle came and told me he was apprehensive that, in the excitement he saw prevailing in the village they would insult us—that many would become intoxicated that day, and he had finally resolved to return to the place where we had left the canoes, and the rest of our people.

We told the seven or eight of our people who were there with us, to withdraw for the day to a small village, half a league from the large one where we were, for fear of some insult, and M. de La Salle and myself went to find M. Dollier, six leagues from the village.

There were some of our people barbarous enough to be willing to witness, from beginning to end, the torture of the poor prisoner, and who reported to us the next day, that his entire body had been burned with red hot irons for the space of six hours; that there was not the least spot left that had not been roasted. After that they had required him to run six courses past the place where the Iroquois were waiting for him, armed with burning clubs, with which they goaded and beat him to the ground when he attempted to join them.

Many took kettles full of coals and hot ashes, with which they covered him, as soon as, by reason of fatigue and debility, he wished to take a moment's repose. At length, after two hours of this barbarous diversion, they knocked him down with a stone, and throwing themselves upon him, cut his body in pieces. One carried off his head another an arm, a third some other member, which they put in the pot for a feast.

Many offered some to the Frenchmen, telling them there was nothing in the world better to eat, but no one desired to try the experiment.

During our stay at that village we enquired particularly about the road we must take in order to reach the Ohio river, and they all told us to go in search of it from Sonnon-

taoun. That it required six day's journey by land.*

This induced us to believe that we could not possibly reach it in that way, as we would hardly be able to carry, for so long a journey, our necessary provisions, much less our baggage. But they told us at the same time, that in going to find it by way of Lake Erie in canoes, we would have only a three days' portage before arriving at that river.

We were relieved from our difficulties in regard to a guide, by the arrival from the Dutch of an Indian who lodged in our cabin. He belonged to a village of one of the five Iroquois nations, which is situated at the end of Lake Ontario, for the convenience of hunting the deer and the bear, which are abundant in that vicinity. This Indian assured us that we would have no trouble in finding a guide—that a number of captives of the nations we desired to visit were there, and he would very cheerfully conduct us thither.

After departing we found a river † one eighth of a league broad and extremely rapid, forming the outlet or communication from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario. The depth of the river (for it is properly the St. Lawrence), is at this place extraordinary, for, on sounding close by the shore, we found fifteen or sixteen fathoms of water. This outlet is forty leagues long, and has, for ten or twelve leagues above its embouchure into Lake Ontario, one of the finest cataracts, or falls of water in the world, for all the Indians of whom I have enquired about it, say, that the river falls at that place from a rock higher than the tallest pines, that it is about two hundred feet. In fact we heard it from the place where we were, although from ten to twelve leagues distant, but the fall gives such a momentum to the water, that its velocity prevented our ascending the current by rowing, except with great difficulty. At a quarter of a league from the outlet where we were, it grows narrower, and its channel is confined between two very high, steep, rocky banks, inducing the belief that the navigation would be very difficult up to the cataract. As to the river above the falls, the current very often sucks into this gulf, from a great distance deer, and stags, elk and roebucks, that suffer themselves to be drawn from such a point in crossing the river, that they are compelled to descend the falls, and to be overwhelmed in its frightful abyss ‡

† Niagara.

‡ Galinee's description of the falls is probably the earliest on record. His account which is wholly derived from the Indians, is remarkably correct. If they had been visited by the Jesuits, prior to the time of this expedition, they have failed to relate the fact, or, to describe them in

* The route they proposed to take was probably up the Genesee river to one of its sources crossing from thence to the head waters of the Alleghany River.