

in the south of France, or Florence, in Italy. Its climate is healthful, though, as is the case in all inland districts, the variations of temperature are considerable. The ordinary maximum temperature for summer is about 90 degrees Fahrenheit, and an ordinary winter minimum about zero, though in exceptional years these extremes are sometimes exceeded.

The first white visitor to the spot on which Hamilton now stands was Robert Cavalier, Sieur de La Salle. In 1696 that gallant Frenchman, who afterwards became so famous by his adventures and discoveries, left Montreal at the head of an expedition composed of twenty-two white men and a number of Seneca Indians, and accompanied by two priests. They traveled by canoe, and occupied thirty-five days in ascending the St. Lawrence river to Lake Ontario. Skirting the south shore of the lake, they reached the beach, which they crossed at its southern extremity into Burlington Bay, probably not being able to find the channel, which was at the extreme northern extremity, immediately under the present Brant House. The party stayed in this neighborhood for some time, and on that occasion La Salle went no farther. He fell ill, in consequence, it was thought, of seeing three immense rattlesnakes crawling up a rock while he was out hunting, and he returned to Montreal. He reported that the country to the south and west of Lake Ontario was a veritable paradise for the sportsman; but all the early explorers agreed that there was something wierd and uncanny about it. It had been for many years a debatable land between hostile Indian tribes, and it is probable that ghostly memories of fierce battles lingered in their traditions and colored the accounts they gave of it to their French visitors. Nine years after his first visit La Salle erected a fort at the mouth of the Niagara river, but no attempt was made by the French to effect any settlement at the western end of the lake.

When Canada passed from the dominion of the French, a British garrison was stationed at Fort Niagara, and one of the officers of the garrison, Lieutenant Coote, pushed his hunting expeditions as far as Burlington Bay; and, finding it literally covered with wild ducks, while deer and other game were plentiful on the shore, he too called it a paradise. The term was afterward restricted to the marsh west of the heights, which by some is still called Coote's Paradise.

But the country at the head of the lake remained unsettled, and almost unseen, by white men, except for the occasional visit of a hunting party or of a trader seeking furs from the In-