

towards the west was the Gorrie pass. It was by this gully that all the water of the river had necessarily to pass.

It is very probable that a first landslide, comparatively limited, took place above the Gorrie falls at M (see the map), and that *débris* of all sorts, trees, clay, sand, then began to block this gorge.

One sees still, indeed, an inextricable confusion of great tree-trunks, like a forest in miniature, which has accumulated in the old channel to this passage and shut it up completely.

The same conclusion is arrived at, basing oneself on an observation made towards 7 o'clock in the evening by an inhabitant of Ste. Christine (left bank), whose house is half a league from the river, just in front of the Gorrie mill.

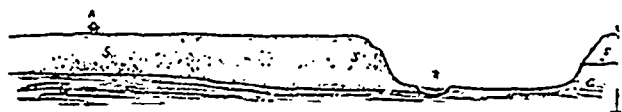
He saw, during about twenty minutes, as it were, powerful jets of vapor thrown on to the tops of the trees near the Gorrie falls. The appearance of those jets was absolutely that of vapor escaping from the funnel of a locomotive in motion. These white puffs were afterwards dispersed in following the course of the river, with great rapidity. At the end of a quarter of an hour they had ceased.

Evidently this was the landslide commencing. The very heavy masses of clay, in falling into the water, caused it to be thrown to a great height, in very attenuated drops, and in the doubtful light of early evening one could take this spray for jets of vapor.

Already at this moment the Gorrie channel was blocked up, and the water, in attacking the more elevated levels, brought about landslides, the materials of which contributed to block more and more the old channel.

The water, stopped in its course, then accumulated behind the "Horse-back" to a height which surpassed its old level by 100 ft., filling up more or less completely the vast basin where apparently the river flowed to the east of the "Horse-back."

Under the influence of the enormous hydrostatic pressure which resulted from this, this barrier (the Horse-back) was broken in its weakest part, about three arpents from the falls, and the immense mass of water was precipitated into the breach with inconceivable violence. The torrent then began to demolish the base of the sandy terraces *f*, placed on the right bank of the river. It swept their extremities, and the whole mass of these terraces, which only rested on a clayey surface, slipped over towards the south-east and installed itself across the old bed which it had blocked up.



Audy Section before the slide. S, sand bank, G, beds of soil, R, section of river, A, Audy's house.

It was this great movement from the north-west to the south-east which carried away the houses of Gauthier, Audy and Darveau beyond the old channel, and caused them to make a journey of more than 25 arpents (Section CD). They were near the barn, which is seen in photograph No. 3. The next day they were where one sees them in photograph No. 2. Both have now disappeared. The river, in washing away its banks, carried them away.



Audy Section after the slide; S, G & R, near the same as above; R, with a dot at top, represents the former bed of river; A, the portion of the Audy house on the morning after the cataclysm.

Did this gigantic slide take place all at once, or has it required a certain amount of time? On this subject positive data are almost completely wanting. One of the victims affirms that no movement was perceived up to the instant when they had already been taken to their destination. Another says he felt some shocks for about ten minutes, the final shock being of such violence as to force him to go out to find out what was passing. The other unfortunates were so terrified that the observations which they were able to make were necessarily incomplete and confused. Many others than themselves were ignorant until the morning of what had happened. All night they believed that their houses had not budged from their original position the length of the public road. The incessant movements of the ground also, and above all, the invasion of the water pressing them more and more closely, the formidable noises of the torrents which appeared to surround them—all this was for them an impenetrable mystery which rendered them powerless. To explain how their houses, which they knew to be 200 ft. above the river, could be thus surrounded by water, they were reduced to believe in a kind of deluge. They thought the whole parish must have been gulfed, and thanked Divine Providence for sparing them alone.

It was only in the morning that they saw what had come to them, and that they could give an account of the terrible dangers from which they had escaped.

One easily understands that this slide could not show itself with regularity in its whole surface. Some parts descended more quickly than others. Hence the local landslides, the result of which was to give to the portion overthrown the appearance of an agitated sea which had been suddenly congealed. Hence, also, that singular twirling movement which affected most the houses of Audy and Darveau in such a manner that, after the landslide, they had changed their relative position; that on the left was found on the right, and at the same time placed lower down, and they had turned on themselves at an angle of nearly 180°.

Further, the enormous avalanche of water which came from the east covered over, and covered again, more or less, the largest portion of the overthrown surface to such a degree that towards three o'clock in the morning the wrecked unfortunates who had passed the night on an elevated islet which happily remained dry, could see water only on all sides. They believed themselves to be in the middle of a lake, the dirty waters of which, covered over with broken, washed-down trees, were precipitated with the force of a torrent towards the old channel on the south-west.

The rescue of the fourteen wrecked persons was effected on the morning of the 28th April, towards 8 o'clock, by an able rower, young Wilfrid Perron. A rapid current separated them from terra-firma, and the brave rescuer had to make fourteen journeys before succeeding in saving them all. The current was so strong that he could only take one person across at each embarkation. Yet he fell in the water four times during these different voyages. Actions less heroic than that have often been rewarded publicly.