

On the fifteenth, Hennepin took the helm, and with the aid of three men towing on shore, reached the foot of the rapids, and moored the bark to the American shore, below the precipitous cliffs of the Mountain Ridge. They employed the seventeenth and the two following days in constructing a cabin on the site of Lewiston, to serve as a storehouse for the use of the expedition. They were obliged to thaw the frozen ground with boiling water, before the palisades could be driven.

On the twentieth, and the next three days, the ice came down the rapids with such force, and in such quantities, as to threaten the safety of their bark. To guard against the danger, the carpenters, under the direction of La Motte, made a capstan, with which they endeavored to draw the vessel into a ravine; but the strain on the cable broke it three times. They finally passed it around the hull, and succeeded, with ropes attached, in hauling her to a place of safety.*

A further advance by vessel or canoe having been checked by the rapids, a portage around the Falls must now be made. Hennepin's reconnoissance, as before seen, had proved the one on the Canadian side to be unsuitable. It now remained to explore the other. Before doing so, it became necessary to consult La Salle, who had not yet arrived from Fort Frontenac, and also to conciliate the neighboring Senecas. The preparations made by La Salle to build a fort at the mouth of the Niagara, and a vessel above the Falls, on the territory claimed by the Senecas, had aroused the jealousy of that proud people. Attempts had been made, with some success, to propitiate those residing in the small village on the western bank of the river near its mouth.† It was deemed expedient, however, to send an embassy to their capital beyond the Genesee, before proceeding with the enterprise; and to negotiate, with the usual presents, for the required permission.

* Hennepin, N. D., pp. 77, 78. Margry, Découv., vol. ii., p. 8.

† Hennepin, N. D., p. 78.