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The Long Journey to the Country  
of the Hurons  
[excerpt]

by Gabriel Sagard-Théodat

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## TO THE KING OF KINGS

AND ALMIGHTY

MONARCH OF HEAVEN AND EARTH

JESUS CHRIST, *Saviour of the world*

---

**I**T is to Thee, infinite power and goodness, that I address myself, before Thee I prostrate myself with my face to the ground and my cheeks bathed in a torrent of tears ceaselessly flowing from my two eyes by reason of the grief and bitterness of my heart, which is truly broken and with reason distressed at the sight of so many poor souls without the faith and in savagery, ever sunk in the thick darkness of their unbelief. Thou knowest, my Lord and my God, that we have devoted ourselves for so many years to New France, and have done our utmost to rescue souls from the spirit of darkness, but the needful support of Old France has failed us. O Lord, our entreaties and remonstrances have served but little. It may be, most gentle Jesus, that the guardian angel Thou hast given her has withheld the aid that we hoped to receive from her for New France, quietly insinuating into the hearts and minds of those who had some feeling for that country's good the idea that the troubles, distractions, and divers perils attendant on, and inseparable from, the pursuit of so great a good may often, for souls feebly rooted in virtue, yield fruits the reverse of virtu-

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ous. If so it is, then be pleased, O my God, to give the angel of New France the victory over that of Old France; for, though a few may [now] make profit out of it to their own hurt, many will be able to derive benefit from it with the help of that great guardian angel, and chiefly by Thine aid, O God, to whom all is possible and from whom we look for all the good that may result; for it concerns Thy glory and Thy service. Have pity and compassion then on these poor souls, bought at the price of Thy most precious blood, O my Lord and my God, so that they may be drawn out of the darkness of unbelief and turned to Thee, and, after living in conformity with Thy divine precepts until they die, may depart to rejoice in Thee for eternity, together with the blessed angels in Paradise, whither I pray Thy divine Majesty to grant me grace also to go, after having lived here below through Thy favour in the same grace, and in the observance of the vows of my Community and of Thy divine Commandments.

TO THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS

Noble and puissant prince

HENRY OF LORRAINE<sup>1</sup>

COMTE D'ARCOURT

---

MY LORD

*A mighty inspiration, and ravishing to think of, is the enjoyment of the countenance and presence of a prince whose only affection is for virtue. If I am so bold as to address myself to your Highness to make the offer (which, in all humility, I do) of my little "Journey to the country of the Hurons", the fault, if I commit one, being as I am under the sway and delightful charm of your virtue, must be attributed to the bright fame of that same virtue of yours. At what shrine could I pay my vows with greater merit than at yours? Where could I find greater support against those who are envious and ill-disposed towards my "History" than with a noble and victorious prince like yourself, whose virtues win such admiration among the great ones of the land that they seem to fix the standard for the most accomplished princes. Under the wing of your protection, my Lord, if you deign to confer the honour of it, my little treatise may without fear of de-*

<sup>1</sup>In the *Histoire* Henry of Lorraine is described as Archbishop and Duke of Rheims, first peer of France, Legate of the Holy See, Abbot of the Monasteries of Saint-Denis and Saint-Remy.

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*traction make its way under favourable auspices throughout the whole world. Your descent from the most ancient, august, and royal house of Lorraine, members of which in times past have crossed the seas, conquered the unbelievers, and in royal state possessed for many years all the holy places in Palestine, confers authority upon you and makes your name known among all the nations of the earth; so much so that it is said of your house that it has always been saintly and never given nourishment to a monstrous offspring. This is a notable and imperishable honour which I pray God to continue to you.*

*Accept then, my Lord, as a token of goodwill towards your Highness, the presentation of this little book, until Heaven may afford me other and more fitting opportunities of giving expression to the obligations imposed by you upon our religious Community and especially upon myself—who all my life shall be, my Lord*

Your most humble servant in JESUS CHRIST,

BROTHER GABRIEL SAGARD,  
*unworthy Recollect.*

*Paris, 31st of July, 1632.*

## TO THE READER

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AS a wise man of the Garamantes said to the great king Alexander, it is a truth known to all, even to unbelievers, that man's perfection consists not in seeing much nor in knowing much, but in accomplishing God's will and good pleasure. My mind has long been kept in uncertainty as to whether I ought to maintain silence, or satisfy so many souls, followers of the religious life as well as those in the world, who kept begging me to make known and put before the public the narrative of the journey I took into the Huron country; and of myself I could come to no decision. But at last, after having more closely considered the advantage that might accrue therefrom to the glory of God and the salvation of my neighbour, I obtained leave from my Superiors, and have taken pen in hand to describe in this *History* and this *Journey among the Hurons* all that can be said about the country and its inhabitants. The perusal of it will be the pleasanter to all sorts of persons because the book is filled with many diverse matters, some admirable and remarkable as occurring among barbarians and savages, others beastly and inhuman in beings who ought to be under the control of reason and to recognize that a God has placed them in this world with the prospect of enjoying Paradise hereafter. Some one may tell me that I ought to have adopted the style of the age, or used my pen freely to polish and enrich my recollections and

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facilitate their course amid all the obstacles which envious minds, too common in these days, might heap up against me; and in fact I did think of it, not to assume for myself the merits and scientific acquirements of others, but to satisfy those who are most inquisitive and critical in discussions of the present day. But, on the other hand, I have been advised to follow the artless simplicity of my usual manner (and this will be the more pleasing to persons of virtue and worth) rather than to amuse myself with elaborating a refined and affected style which would have hidden my countenance and clouded the candid sincerity of my *History*, wherein there should be nothing useless or superfluous.

Here I stop abruptly, here I remain silent, and listen patiently to the salutary admonishments of a few enthusiasts, who will tell me that I have employed both my pen and my time on a subject which does not transport our soul, like another St. Paul, to the third Heaven. True, I admit my failure and my lack of merit; but nevertheless I will say, and with truth, that worthy souls will find something in it of edification and for which to praise God, who has given us our birth in a Christian land where His sacred name is known and worshipped, in contrast to so many unbelievers who live and die without the knowledge of Him and the prospect of His Paradise. The more inquiring readers also, and those less inclined to religion, who have no other idea than to amuse themselves and learn from the *History* the disposition, behaviour, and various activities and ceremonies of a barbarous people, will also find in it wherewith to be content and satisfied, and perchance their own salvation as a result of the reflexions they will make upon themselves.

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Likewise those who, following a holy inspiration, may desire to go to that land to take part in the conversion of the savages, or to make a home and live there like Christians, will learn also the nature of the country in which they will have to dwell, and the people with whom they will have to deal, and what they will need in that land, so as to provide themselves before setting out on their journey. Then, our Dictionary will teach them, first, all the chief and essential things they will have to say among the Hurons, and in the other provinces and tribes by whom this language is used, such as the Tobacco tribe, the Neutral nation, the province of Fire, that of the Stinkards,<sup>1</sup> the Forest nation, that of the Coppermines, the Iroquois, the province of the High-Hairs, and several others; also among the Sorcerers, the Island people, the Little tribe, and the Algonquins, who know the language in some measure on account of the necessity of using it when they travel, or when they have to trade with any persons belonging to the provinces of the Hurons and the other sedentary tribes.

I must reply to your thought, that Christianity has made little advance in that country in spite of the labours, care, and diligence which the Recollects have brought to it, with results far below that of the ten millions of souls whom our friars have baptized in the course of years in the East and West Indies, ever since the blessed Brother Martin of Valence and his Recollect companions set foot there. They were the first to pave the way for all the rest of our Brothers, who now occupy many provinces with their convents, and subsequently for all the members

<sup>1</sup>*Puants*, the Winnebago. For identification of the other tribes see *Handbook of the Indians of Canada* (Appendix to the Tenth Report of the Geographic Board of Canada, Ottawa, 1912). An account of the languages and of other factors in native life is given in D. Jenness, *Indians of Canada* (Ottawa, 1932).



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of the other Orders who have since arrived. It is a source of regret and unhappiness to us that we have not been seconded, and that matters have not been so happily advanced as our expectations promised. These expectations were insecurely based on the existence of colonies of good and virtuous Frenchmen, which ought to have been established and without which the glory of God can almost never be promoted or Christianity be strongly rooted. This is not only my opinion and the opinion of all worthy people, but that of all who are guided in any respect by the light of reason.

Accept my excuses, if the short time I have had to arrange and draw up my recollections and my Dictionary, since my decision to publish them, has caused some slight errors or repetitions to creep in. For while working at them, with a mind preoccupied by several other duties and appointments, I often did not remember at one time what I had composed and written at another. These are faults that imply the pardon they expect from your charity, from which also I implore your prayers that God may deliver me from sin here and grant me His Paradise in another world.

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In which an account is given of the land and water animals and of the fruits, plants, and natural abundance found ordinarily in the country of our savages; then our return from the Huron province to that of Canada; together with a short dictionary of the principal words of the Huron language necessary for those who have no acquaintance with it and have to trade with these Hurons.

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Royal Licence [not translated]

Approval of the Fathers of the Order [not translated]



## CHAPTER I

*Journey to the country of the Hurons, situated  
in America towards the Freshwater sea, on the  
farthest frontiers of New France called Canada*

GO ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, said our Lord. This is the commandment which God gave to His Apostles, and after them to persons of Apostolic functions, to carry the gospel throughout the world in order to expel idolatry, civilize the barbarous manners of the Gentiles, and erect trophies of the victories of the Cross through the gospel and the preaching of His sacred name. The vain ambition to know and learn singular things, and to understand the ways and various fashions of philosophizing, prompted the great Apollonius of Tyana to spare himself no labour in order to be complete and famous through knowledge of the finest and most splendid things in the universe. This was what started him on his travels from Egypt, through the whole of Africa, past the pillars of Hercules, to deliberate with the great men of wisdom in Spain, to visit our own Druids in Gaul, to slip into the luxury of Italy, that he might study in that country the civilization, grandeur, and refinement of the Roman Empire, after that to slip into Greece, then to cross the Hellespont in order to view the wealth of Asia; and finally after entering Persia, climbing over the Caucasus, passing through the midst of the Albanians, Scythians, Massagetae, in short having trav-

ersed the mighty kingdoms of India and crossed the great river Phison<sup>1</sup> he arrived at length among the Brahmans for the purpose of hearing the great Hyarcas philosophize on nature and the movement of the stars. Insatiable as he was in the pursuit of knowledge, and having gone through all the provinces in which he thought he might learn something excellent, to the end that he might become more godlike among men, he left behind him, after all his great labours, nothing worthy of remembrance but one paltry book, containing the doctrines of the followers of Pythagoras, confused in arrangement, but ornate and polished in diction; and these he pretended to have learned in the cave of Trophonius. It was received with such exalted praise by the people of Antium that to immortalize his memory they consecrated it at the greatest festival of their most magnificent temple.

This great man by his travels had acquired so much self-sufficiency and experience that princes set store by his friendship, in particular the Emperor Vespasian to such a degree as to desire, whether for ostentation or in good earnest, to make use of him in the administration of his great Empire; and he sent for him to come to Rome, with enticing promises to share with him all his possessions, including the Empire, by way of showing the high esteem in which he held this great personage. Nevertheless, Apollonius considered that nothing had come under his notice that was worth so much toil, since he had not been able to meet with what, in his opinion, was impartial justice in the regulation of the world; for everywhere he had found the foolish in authority over the wise, the proud over the humble, the contentious over the peaceable, the godless over the devout. And, what

<sup>1</sup>Perhaps the Phasis which flows into the Black sea just south of the Caucasus.

most of all afflicted him, he had nowhere on earth discovered exemption from death.

I, for my part, have never had so crazed a longing to acquire knowledge by travel, for I was brought up in the school of the Son of God, under the rule and discipline of the Seraphic Order of St. Francis, wherein is taught the sound knowledge of the Saints, apart from which all that can be learnt is but the vain trifling of curiosity. But I have been desirous of making known to the public what I saw in a journey to New France, which the authority of my Superiors made me undertake in order that I might aid our Fathers who were already there, and try to bear thither the torch of the knowledge of God's Son and to dispel the darkness of savagery and unbelief, according to the command of our God laid upon us by the mouth of His Apostles. For just as our Fathers of the Seraphic Order of St. Francis had been the first to carry the gospel into the East and West Indies, and to unfurl the standard of our redemption among peoples who had never heard nor known of it, we also, in imitation of them, should contribute our zeal and devotion to gain the same victory and erect the same trophies of our salvation in a place where the devil till now has reigned undisturbed.

It will not be in imitation of Apollonius, to cultivate my mind and become wiser, that I shall visit these wide provinces. There savagery and brutishness have taken such hold that the rest of this narrative will arouse in your souls pity for the wretchedness and blindness of these poor tribes, and I shall make you see what we owe to Jesus our kind Master for having delivered us from such darkness and brutishness, and refined our mind to the extent of being able to know and love Him and to hope for adoption as His children. You shall see as in a



perspective picture, richly engraved, the wretchedness of human nature, tainted at the source, deprived of the training of the faith, destitute of morality, and a victim of the most deadly barbarism to which in its hideousness the absence of any heavenly illumination could give birth. The narrative will be the more entertaining from the variety of matters that I shall relate as having noticed during the two years or thereabouts of my stay, and I promise myself that the compassion you will feel for the wretchedness of these people, who share your human nature, will call forth from your hearts vows and tears and sighs, in an appeal to Heaven to shed down upon their hearts that celestial light which alone can free them from enslavement to the devil, to enrich their minds with salutary discourse, and to civilize their savagery with the refinement of moral principles, so that recognizing that they are men they may become Christians and share with you that faith which gives us the honourable name of children of God, coheirs with Jesus our kind Master in the inheritance he gained for us at the price of His blood, where will be found that true immortality that Apollonius in his vanity could not after so many journeys discover upon earth; and indeed there is no fear that it will there be found.

## CHAPTER II

### *Our start, and the rest of our voyage*

**A**FTER our congregation had been held at Paris I received orders to accompany Father Nicolas,<sup>1</sup> an aged Preacher, in order to go to the help of our Fathers in their mission for the conversion of the peoples of New France. We left Paris with the blessing of our reverend Father Provincial on the 18th of March, 1624,<sup>2</sup> in apostolic manner on foot, and with the usual baggage of the poor Recollect Fathers Minor of our glorious Father St. Francis. We reached Dieppe in good health where the ship, freighted and ready, was only awaiting a fair wind to set sail and begin our prosperous voyage. So only with great difficulty could we get a short rest, for we had to embark the very day of our arrival, and we left at midnight with quite a fair wind; this however in its fickleness soon left us, and a contrary wind came upon us unexpectedly as we were skirting the English coast. It brought to my companion a very disagreeable attack of sea-sickness, disturbing him greatly and forcing him to pay tribute to the sea, which is the only remedy for curing these ocean illnesses. Thanks be to our Lord, we had already ploughed through about 100 leagues of water before I was compelled to give way to this troublesome malady; but I felt better afterwards, and I can truly say

<sup>1</sup>The *Histoire* gives his full name, Nicolas Viel.

<sup>2</sup>The date should be 1623.

that I had never imagined sea-sickness to be so troublesome and disagreeable as I experienced it, for it seemed to me that I had never had such bodily suffering in my whole life as during the voyage of three months and six days, which it took us, because of contrary winds, to cross that great and terrible ocean and reach Quebec, the residence of our Fathers.

Now, since the captain of our ship was commissioned to take on a cargo of salt at Brouage, we had to put in there and pass La Rochelle, in the roadstead of which we waited for two days while our people went into the town on their own private business. A great many Dutch vessels were there, both ships of war and merchant-men going for cargoes of salt to Brouage and the river Serre near Marans. We had already on our way encountered about eighty or a hundred<sup>1</sup> in separate fleets, but none had borne down on us, since our flag made known who we were; there was only one Dutch pirate who wanted to attack us and fight, and he had already with that object opened his port-holes and served out to his men drink and weapons. But since we were not strong enough we forged ahead quietly, for the wretch had already in tow behind him another vessel laden with sugar and other merchandise, which he had stolen from some poor French and Spaniards on their way from Spain.

It is usual to engage a pilot from La Rochelle to take charge of the ships going to the river Serre, on account of several dangerous places which have to be passed, and so the pilot to take the ship into this neighbourhood must be a native, because no others would dare to run the risk. Nevertheless this La Rochelle pilot of ours all but brought us to destruction; for he was unwilling to anchor, as

<sup>1</sup>In the *Histoire* this is changed to "30 or 40".

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advised, during a fog, but trusted to the lead, and so ran us aground about four o'clock in the afternoon. We were in a pitiful state, for it was supposed that we could never get off. In fact, if God had not sent a calm and kept our vessel from heeling over completely, the ship and all the cargo had been lost. We remained in that position till about six or seven o'clock the following morning when the tide lifted us off. In that place we were no more than a round quarter-league from shore, and we did not think we were so near, otherwise most of the ship's company would have been taken there in the shallop while we were in danger, so as to lighten the ship to that extent and save us all in case it should turn over even a little more. For the list was already so great that one could no longer walk upright, but had to drag oneself along using one's hands. Everybody was downcast and no one had the courage to eat or drink, though supper was prepared and served, and the sailors' pannikins and bowls filled. As for me I was very weak and would gladly have taken something, but the fear of being an example for evil hindered me and made me fast like the rest and continue all night in prayer with my companion, awaiting the merciful help of God. Our people were already talking of throwing into the sea the pilot who had put us aground. One group wanted to seize the skiff, to try and save themselves, but the captain threatened to shoot the first man who approached it, for his idea was to save all or lose all. Our Lord in pity for my weakness granted me grace to be very little disturbed or affected by the great danger upon us then, or by any others that we encountered during our voyage, for through my confidence in the divine goodness and the merits of the Virgin and all the Saints it never came into my mind that we should perish;

otherwise I should have had great reason to be afraid, since the most experienced pilots and sailors were not without fear. And this astonished many people, one of whom, annoyed as it were at seeing me without alarm during a furious storm that lasted eight days, said to me by way of reproach that he had it in his mind that I was no Christian, being without apprehension in such great danger. I told him that we were in the hands of God and that nothing would happen to us except by His holy will, and that I had embarked with the intention of going to win souls for our Lord in the country of the savages, and to endure martyrdom there if such was His sacred pleasure; that if His divine mercy purposed that I should die on the way I ought no less to be content. To be in such great terror, I said, was not a good sign, but everyone should rather try to put his soul right with God, and after doing what he could to escape from danger and shipwreck to leave the rest to God; and though I was a great sinner I should not on that account lose the hope and the confidence I ought to repose in my Lord and in His Saints, who were witnesses of our misfortune and danger and could deliver us from it when they pleased, in the good pleasure of His divine Majesty.

After being delivered from the danger of death and of losing the vessel, which was believed inevitable, we sailed away and quite soon came to the river Serre, where we were to take a cargo of salt from the marshes of Marans. We disembarked, and being only two full leagues from Brouage went to it to obtain some refreshment from our Brothers of the Province of the Conception who have a very fine convent there. They received us and comforted us with great charity. When our vessel was laden and ready to sail again we returned to her and

re-embarked with a new pilot from Marans to take us back to La Rochelle. He nearly grounded us again, and we should inevitably have been on shore if it had been the least bit foggy. This pricked the bubble of his presumption and unbearable conceit, for he considered himself the most skilful pilot of those seas; moreover he belonged to the so-called New religion and was one of the most bigoted adherents, as was the first pilot who had run us aground, although he was more reserved and modest.

Near La Rochelle there are a great many porpoises; our sailors did not take the trouble to harpoon any of them, but they caught a number of cuttle-fish, which are very good when fried, like hard-boiled white of egg. They also caught gurnards with hook and line dragged behind the ship; these fish are a little bigger than red mullets. We made soup from them, which was very good, and the fish likewise. While I was feeling ill it gave me a little strength. But I was very ill-pleased that the surgeon who had the care of the sick was a Huguenot and with little liking for monks; and for that reason I preferred suffering to making any request of him. Moreover he had scant courtesy for anybody. As we passed the island of Ré we had our casks filled with fresh water for the voyage; then we put on sail and set our course for Canada, and beat up by the English channel for the open sea, in the keeping of God and at the mercy of the winds.

After we had run two or three hundred leagues a pirate or rover came to inspect us, and as a contemptuous threat told us that he would speak to us after supper. No reply was given him, but when he left our neighbourhood the rope coverings were stretched and every man

stood to his weapons to fight, in case he should have come back as he had said. But he did not return to us, being perhaps of opinion that there was nothing to be got except blows, and no merchandise at all. Yet for three or four days he still hovered and prowled within sight of us, looking for some piratical capture.

An accident happened on our ship on the 1st day of May, which caused us great sorrow. It is the custom on that day for all the sailors to draw up in ranks with their arms in the morning and fire a salute for the captain of the ship. One good fellow who was little used to weapons inadvertently and carelessly rammed a double or triple charge into a wretched musket he had, and when he tried to fire it, it burst, killed the sailor who stood beside him, and wounded another slightly in the hand. I never saw anything so determined as the poor man who was mortally wounded. All his generative organs were cut off and carried away and part of the flesh of his thighs and belly was hanging. But after recovering from the swoon into which he had fallen from the shock he himself summoned the surgeon and urged him to sew up the wound and apply his remedies to it, and up to the moment of his death he spoke with a mind so sensible and composed, and with such admirable endurance, that from his speech one would not have thought him injured. Our good Father Nicolas took his confession, and shortly afterwards he died. Then he was wrapped in his mattress and next morning laid on the deck. We recited the service for the dead with all the usual prayers; the body was then put on a plank and pushed down into the sea; then a match was lit and a cannon fired, which is the funeral ceremony usually performed for those who die at sea.

After that we were tossed about, for the space of seven or eight days continuously, by so furious a storm that it seemed as though sea and sky must come together. It was feared that a breach would be made somewhere in the ship from the violent seas which struck her every moment, or that the raging waves which rose even above the poop would sink the vessel; for they had already broken and carried away the stern-walks with everything inside them. For that reason we were forced to lower all sails and lie to, drifting at the mercy of the waves, and tossed about in extraordinary fashion while the fury lasted. If there was any chest ill secured one heard it rolling about, and sometimes the soup-pot was upset, and while we were at dinner or supper unless we held on tight to our plates they would fly from one end of the table to the other; so we had to hold them, as well as the drinking-cup, with attention to the motion of the vessel, which we left to take its course in God's keeping, since it was no longer under control.

During this time those who were most devout were praying to God, but as for the sailors I can assure you it is just the time when they are less devout than usual; they try to conceal their dread of shipwreck for fear, should they escape it, of being jeered at by their companions, on account of the fear and terror they have manifested by their devotions. This is a real contrivance of the devil for destroying persons in a state of wickedness. It is very right, indeed very necessary, not to be disturbed for anything that may happen, because that renders a man less fit to extricate himself from the danger; but one must not show oneself more presumptuous on that account but commit oneself to God and busy oneself with what seems expedient and necessary for one's



safety and deliverance. Now these storms were often announced to us by the porpoises<sup>1</sup> coming about our ship in thousands, playing together in a very amusing way; some of them have a blunt thick snout, others a pointed one. At one time during this hurricane I was alone with my companion in the captain's cabin, reading for my spiritual satisfaction the meditations of St. Bonaventure, and the Father not having yet finished his Office was reciting it on his knees near the window which looks out upon the gallery, when all at once a sea shattered a plank at the base of the cabin, poured in, washed the Father up a little from his knees, and wrapped round part of my body. This made everything swim before my eyes; however without alarming myself further I got up quickly from where I was sitting and felt my way to open the door in order to give passage to the water, for I remembered having heard that a captain and his son were once drowned by a sea which came into their cabin. Sometimes also we were caught in the undertow of a wave as high as the mainmast; these give very dangerous blows, capable of plunging a ship into the watery abyss. When the storm came upon us we were well out beyond the Azores, which belong to the King of Spain; we came no nearer to them than a day's sail.

Usually after a great storm there follows a great calm, and in fact we sometimes had very tiresome calms, hindering us from making progress. During these the sailors would be playing and dancing on deck; then a thick cloud would be seen rising above the horizon and forthwith they would have to quit those occupations and be on the look-out for the squawl of wind which it sur-

<sup>1</sup>*Marsouins*, porpoises. The name was subsequently applied to the white whale, as it still is in the province of Quebec.

rounded, and which, breaking out with howling and whistling, was capable of turning our vessel upside down if there were not men ready to carry out the orders of the ship's master. Now the calm which settled down on us after that great storm served us very opportunely by enabling us to raise from the sea a great barrel of very good olive oil which we saw quite near us floating on the water; we saw another also two or three days later but the sea was beginning to rise and prevented us from getting it. These barrels, we may guess, might have belonged to some ship knocked to pieces at sea by the furious hurricanes and storms which we had suffered from a short time previously.

Some days afterwards we met a small English ship; they said that they came from Virginia and from some other land, for they had a quantity of palm-reeds,<sup>1</sup> tobacco, cochineal, and hides.<sup>2</sup> It was dismasted in consequence of the gales they had endured, and in order that they might be able to reach the country of England and Scotland, whence came most of the crew, they had set sail on their foremast, the only one left, in place of the mainmast which had snapped off along with the others. They tried to slip past us and escape, but we came up with them and made them stop, asking them where they hailed from, as is the usage at sea for the one which is or supposes itself to be the stronger; they replied, from England; we answered, strike (that is, lower) sail, get out your shallop and come and show us your clearance papers for our inspection; for if any ship is found without a clearance from the owner it comes under the authority and commission of the one which seizes it. But the fact is

<sup>1</sup>A Cuban reed, of which the leaves were used to make a kind of cordage.

<sup>2</sup>The *Histoire* adds, "which are not common in Virginia".

that in this, as in every other matter, great wrongs are perpetrated, for one ship may pretend to be a merchantman and have a valid commission, while it is really pirate and merchantman in one, availing itself of its double character according to the occasion and the encounter. Thus our sailors would have been glad to meet some small Spanish ship, in which is usually found valuable merchandise, in order to make it their prey and satisfy their greed. This is why one must not come near another ship at sea except with good warrant, for fear of a rover being captured by another, a pirate.<sup>1</sup> And if, on the question being put where a ship hails from, the answer is "from the sea", that is to say, a sea-rover, that means that one must come alongside and fight, unless one prefers to surrender at the mercy and discretion of the stronger. It is also a custom at sea, when some private ship meets one of the royal navy, to keep to leeward and not to turn broadside to broadside, but obliquely, and also to lower its flag. However on a long voyage there is no need to keep one flying except on approaching land or when one must fight.

To return to our Englishmen, they came at last to us, that is their ship's master did and some others of the leading men on board, yet not without great fear and altercation, for they thought they would be treated in the same way that they are accustomed to treat Frenchmen when they have the upper hand. It was for this reason that the ship-master proposed privately to our captain in my presence to surrender all the merchandise they had in their vessel, provided their lives should be safe, and that we should let them go their way thus de-

<sup>1</sup>The meaning seems to be that a ship may be sailing under false colours, having fallen into the hands of a pirate.

spoiled of everything except a little food. But we did them no wrong and refused the offer; only we accepted a cask of yams (these are certain West Indian roots, like thick turnips but with a far better flavour) and another of tobacco; these they freely offered to the captain, and to me a sun-dial, which I would not accept for fear of inconveniencing them, for my disposition is not to add affliction to the afflicted, even though he be not deserving of pity. The captain of our vessel, like a wise man, was unwilling of his own accord to settle anything in this respect without first communicating it to the chief people on his ship, and he asked us to give our opinion, which was what he chiefly wished to follow in order to do nothing against his conscience or blameworthy. While we were in this consultation a number of our men had been sent to the English ship to be in authority there and to bring back to our vessel their chief officers, except their captain who was ill; he died of his illness the same night. After having seen all the papers of these poor people and finding nearly a bushel of letters addressed to private individuals in England, we concluded that they could not be outlaws, although their clearance was of too old a date, since besides being few in number and also very lightly armed they had some charter-parties; moreover, all those letters freed them from suspicion, and so we sent them back to their vessel, after they had been with us for three days, shedding tears of delight at being delivered from the slavery or death they were expecting. They thanked us a thousand times for having spoken in their favour, and prostrated themselves to the ground, contrary to their usual custom, when they bade us good-bye.

I amused myself sometimes, when I felt disposed, in

watching the whales spouting and the little whales at play. I saw an immense number of them, particularly at Gaspé where they disturbed our rest by their blowing and the chasing hither and thither of the gibars and whales. The gibar is a species of whale,<sup>1</sup> so called from a hump which it appears to have, the back, where there is a fin, being very high. It is no shorter than a whale, but not so thick or big, and it has a longer and more pointed snout, and a blow-hole on the forehead through which it expels the water with great violence. For this reason some call it the Blower. All the female whales carry and bring forth their young alive, suckle them, and cover and protect them with their fins. Humpbacks and other whales sleep with their heads up and a little above the water, so that the blow-hole is uncovered and at the surface of the water. Whales are seen and recognized from a distance by their tail, which they often show as they dive, and also by the water they shoot up through their blow-holes, more than a puncheon at a time and as high as two lances; from the amount of water thrown up by the whale one may judge how much oil it will produce. From some more than 400 barrels can be taken, others give 120 hogsheads, others less; from the tongue five or six barrels are usually taken. Pliny relates that whales have been seen 600 feet long and 360 broad.<sup>2</sup> From some of these one might get more oil.

When I was returning I saw very few whales at Gaspé

<sup>1</sup>The fin-back whale. Another spelling found in some authors is *joubar*. The *Histoire* says, erroneously, that the *gibar* is the male whale. For this and many other later identifications of animals and plants, see W. F. Ganong, "The Identity of the Animals and Plants Mentioned by the Early Voyagers to Eastern Canada and Newfoundland" (*Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, 3rd series, vol. III, 1909-10).

<sup>2</sup>The measurements are not those of Pliny, who speaks of whales of the size of four *jugera*, and of *pristes* of two hundred cubits (*Nat. Hist.*, IX, 3).

as compared with the previous year, but I cannot imagine why or wherefore, except that it may be partly because of the great quantity of blood from a wound inflicted on a large whale by one of our clerks for his amusement with a harquebus loaded with a double charge. Nevertheless this is neither the means nor the manner of getting them; quite another device is necessary, and instruments which the Basques know very well how to use; for that reason I make no mention of them, and am content that other authors have described them. The first whale we saw in the open sea was asleep, and as we should be passing quite close to it the ship was turned aside a little, for fear lest on awaking it might do us some harm. Amongst the others I saw one of a frightful size, so large that the captain and those who saw it declared emphatically that they had never seen one bigger. What enabled us the better to appreciate its size and length was that while tossing and rising up against the sea it showed part of its huge body. I was greatly surprised at a humpback which with its fin or its tail, for I could not exactly distinguish or be certain of which, struck the water so furiously hard that the sound could be heard far away; they told me that it was to frighten the fish and drive them together so that it might glut itself with them afterwards. One day I saw a fish some ten or twelve feet in length and big in proportion passing quite close alongside our vessel; they told me it was a shark, a fish very fond of human flesh. For which reason it is not a good thing to bathe where there are any, because it never fails to swallow any person it can seize, or at least some member of his body, which it cuts off easily

with the two or three rows of teeth in its mouth;<sup>1</sup> and were it not that it has to turn belly upward or sideways in order to seize its prey, having like a sturgeon its mouth on the under side of a long snout, it would devour everything. But it must take the time to turn and thus it does not do all the harm it would were its mouth in another position.

Quite near the Grand Bank one of our sailors harpooned a dory.<sup>2</sup> This in my judgment is the handsomest fish in the whole sea; for it seems as if Nature had taken pleasure and delight in beautifying it with varied and brilliant colouring, so that indeed it almost dazzles the beholders, varying and changing like a chameleon, and when near death it varies and changes into its brightest colours. It was not more than three feet in length and the fin on its back extended from the head to the tail, all golden in hue and as if covered with very fine gold, and likewise the tail and the fins or swimmers, except that here and there were little spots of a very exquisite blue colour and others vermilion, and others again of a silvery sheen; the rest of the body is all golden, silvery, blue, vermilion, or some other different colour. It is not at all broad in the back, in fact narrow, and the belly also, but it is high and well proportioned to its length. We ate it and found it very good, although a little dry. When it was caught it was following and playing about our vessel, for this fish is so constituted by nature as to like to follow ships; but few are seen except at the Moluccas. We also drew out of the sea a dead fish, shaped like a large perch, with half of the body all red; but none of our

<sup>1</sup>The *Histoire* says, "three, four, five and six"; and adds, "very sharp and dangerous, as in the head of one that I saw in Paris".

<sup>2</sup>*Dorade*, the dolphin-fish or dorado.

people could say or suggest what fish it might be. Sometimes I also saw flying out of the water small fish about four or five feet long, escaping from larger fish that were chasing them. Our sailors harpooned a big female porpoise with a young one inside her. The latter was larded and roasted like a leveret, and we ate it, and the female also which lasted us for several days; this was a great treat for us, for we were tired of salt meat, the ordinary meat at sea.

Quite near the Grand Bank a large number of sea-birds are seen of various kinds. The commonest are the *Godet*, the liver-snatcher, and others we call sea-swallows,<sup>1</sup> something like pigeons except that they are twice as big, with webbed feet, and feed on fish. These birds are a sign to sailors that they are near the Grand Bank and an assurance that they are keeping a direct course. But I, like many others, wonder where they can make their nests and hatch their young, being so far from land. Some persons follow Pliny in asserting that seven days before the winter solstice and seven days after it the sea remains calm, and that during those periods the halcyons<sup>2</sup> build their nests, lay their eggs, and hatch their young, and that navigation then is much safer on that account; but others nevertheless say that this applies only to the sea off Sicily; for this reason I leave the matter to the decision of those who are wiser than I. At Gaspé we caught one of these sea-swallows with a long line, the hook at the end of it being baited with fresh cod's entrails; this is the means used to catch them. Another very hungry sea-swallow, which was circling round our

<sup>1</sup>*Godet*, the razor-billed auk; *Happe-foye*, a name applied by French fishermen to the fulmar or noddy; the Norman name for the same bird is *fouquet* or *fauquet*, which is usually defined as "sea-swallow".

<sup>2</sup>King-fishers.



ship in search of some prey, we caught in the following manner. One of our sailors noticed it and held out to it a herring which he had in his hand; the famished bird came down for it and the clever fellow seized it by the leg and it was ours. We fed it and kept it for quite a long time in a covered bucket, where it remained quite quiet, but it knew how to give a good nip with its beak if any one tried to come near it. Many persons commonly call these birds liver-snatchers on account of their greediness in picking up and gorging themselves with the cods' livers, which are thrown into the sea after the bellies have been cut open; they are so fond of these that they take risks in approaching the ship or boat, in order to seize them at any cost.

The Grand Bank of which we have already spoken, and across which we had to pass, is a high mountainous mass, deeply rooted in the abyss of waters and rising to within 30, 40, or 60 fathoms of the surface of the sea. It is taken to be 120 leagues in length, some say 200, and 60 in breadth, and beyond it no bottom is found any more than on this side of it, until land is approached. While over it we amused ourselves with fishing for cod, for that is more especially the place where great quantities are caught, and they are better fish there than off Newfoundland. While we were passing over it we caught a great many cod and some very large halibut, a very good fish; but it wages fierce war on the cod, eating quantities of them, although its throat is small in proportion to its body, which is almost the shape of a turbot or cat-fish, but ten times as large. They are very good to eat fried and boiled in slices. It is wonderful how keen the cod are to swallow what they come upon or what comes up to them, whether bait, a piece of iron, a stone, or anything else

that falls into the sea. Sometimes, when they cannot disgorge it again, it is found in their stomach, and this is the reason why they are caught in such quantity; for directly they see the bait they swallow it, but one must be careful to pull in the line at once, otherwise they disgorge the hook, and often get off.

I do not know what the cause may be, but on the Grand Bank there is a continual fog, damp, cold, and rainy, in the height of summer as well as in autumn, and away from the Bank it is not so at all; for this reason it would be terribly wearisome and depressing there, if it were not for the amusement and recreation of fishing. One thing above all gave me much trouble when I was not well, a great longing to drink a little fresh water; and we had none because our supply had become foul from the length of time we had been at sea. Moreover, I did not like the cider during these periods of sickness, still less could I take brandy, nor could I endure the smell of tobacco or stock-fish, and many other things, without my stomach being upset; it was as if it were poisoned and often in rebellion against the best food and nourishment. To lie down or lean back gave me some relief, chiefly when the sea was not too high; when it was very rough I was rocked in a marvellous manner, now lying on my side, now with my feet aloft, then my head, and all the time with the usual indisposition. If one was feeling well all this would have been nothing, and one would have adapted oneself to it as cheerfully as the sailors; but in everything the first steps are always difficult, and these are sometimes prolonged greatly at sea, according to the constitution of the individuals and the strength of their stomachs.

Some time<sup>1</sup> after having passed the Grand Bank, we passed the Worm Bank, so called because in the cod caught there are found little worm-like guts which move.<sup>2</sup> Moreover these cod are not so good nor so white in my judgment. Afterwards we passed quite close to Cape Breton (which is calculated to be in 45 and three-quarters degrees of latitude and with 14 degrees 50 minutes declination of the needle), between Cape Breton and the island St. Paul,<sup>3</sup> which is uninhabited and partly rock and seems to be only a league long or thereabouts. But Cape Breton which we had on our left is a large island of triangular shape, 80 or 100 leagues around; it is high land, and I seemed to be looking at England as it showed itself to me for the four days during which, owing to contrary winds, we kept company with it along the coast. This Cape Breton is an unproductive land, yet pleasant in some parts, although, as I am told, savages are seldom seen there. At the point of the Cape which looks towards and is opposite to the island of St. Paul there is a high mound of square shape and flat on the top, with the sea on three sides and a natural moat separating it from the main island. This place seems to have been formed by human labour, in order to build upon it a fortress, which should be impregnable, but the thankless nature of the soil does not warrant so great an outlay, nor does it

<sup>1</sup>The *Histoire* says, "After a run of 12 or 15 leagues".

<sup>2</sup>The French *Banc à Vers*, translated "Worm Bank", is clearly Champlain's *Banc à Vert*, Green Bank, the name it still bears. Sagard's ingenious explanation must therefore be founded on a misreading of Champlain. The *Histoire* adds, "I wished to see these [worms] for myself, to be able to speak of them from experience; and I further noted that these cod usually have their skin black within".

<sup>3</sup>Saint Paul island in Cabot strait lies about 15 miles from Cape North on Cape Breton island.

encourage the idea of making oneself at home in so wretched and barren a spot.

When we had entered the gulf or great bay of the St. Lawrence which leads to Gaspé and Isle Percée, etc., we came the next day upon Bird island,<sup>1</sup> so famed for the immense number of birds that inhabit it. It is about 15 or 16 leagues distant from the mainland, so that thence it cannot be seen at all. This island is reckoned to be in 49 degrees 40 minutes north latitude. The rock or island, in my judgment, is flat with a little sloping talus, and about a bare league in circumference; it is almost oval and very difficult of access. We had intended to climb up if it had been calm, but the sea was a little too rough and prevented us. When there is wind the birds rise easily from the ground, but otherwise certain species of them are hardly able to get on the wing, and can easily be knocked over with sticks, as the sailors from another ship had done, who, before we got there, had loaded their shallop with them and filled several barrels with the eggs found on the nests; but they nearly fell down in a faint on account of the exceeding stench from the droppings of the birds. These birds for the most part live only on fish, and though there are different species, some big, others small, they do not usually form different flocks, but like a dense cloud fly all together above the island and round about, and only separate in order to play, to rise up in the air, or to dive in the sea. It was a pleasure to see them approach our vessel freely and hover round it, and then take a long dive in the water in search of their prey. Their nests are so arranged in the island according to their species that there

<sup>1</sup>Near the Magdalen islands. In the *Histoire* he says that the island is 17 or 18 leagues from Cape Breton and in latitude forty-seven and three-quarters.

is no confusion, in fact excellent order. The large birds are placed near one another, and those less big or of other species along with those that match them, and all in such numbers that hardly could you ever persuade a person to believe it who had not seen it. I ate one which the sailors call a *Guillaume*<sup>1</sup> and the natives *Apponath*, with white and black plumage, as big as a hen, with a short tail and small wings; it was not inferior to any game we have. There is another species smaller than the rest, called *Godets*. There is also another kind, but larger and with white plumage in a division of the island apart from the others, and very difficult to catch because they bite like dogs; these are called *Margaux*.<sup>2</sup>

Near the same island is another one, smaller and almost of the same shape, on which some of our sailors had landed on a previous voyage. They told and assured me that they had found on the seashore fishes as big as an ox, and had killed one by giving it several strokes with their weapons under the belly, after having previously delivered many blows in vain, and to the injury of their weapons, on other parts of its body without being able to inflict a wound, on account of the skin being very hard, although in other respects it is almost defenceless and very bulky. This fish is called by the Spaniards *Maniti*<sup>3</sup> and by others *Hippopotamus*, that is, river-horse. For my part I take it to be the sea-elephant, for besides resembling a big inflated skin it has also two round feet with four nails shaped like those of an elephant; on its feet it also has fins or swimmers, with which it swims, and the swimmers it has on the shoulders

<sup>1</sup>The Great Auk. Another name for it was *Tanguou*.

<sup>2</sup>Gannets.

<sup>3</sup>Walrus. The description is inaccurate in many particulars, but Sagard reports them from hearsay.

extend through its middle to its tail. It has hair like that of the seal, that is, grey or slightly reddish brown. The head is small like that of an ox but with less flesh, and the hair is coarser and rougher. It has two rows of teeth on each side and in the middle are two, one to each side, hanging down from the upper jaw, like the tusks of a young elephant; with these the animal helps itself in climbing up the rocks. (From these teeth our sailors call it the long-tooth beast.) It has small eyes and short ears; it is twenty feet long and ten feet thick, and as heavy as can be. The female gives birth to its young on land, like a cow; it has also two teats for suckling them. As food it seems like flesh rather than fish, and when fresh you would call it veal. As it is one of those cetaceans carrying much fat our Basque and other sailors get very good oil from it, as they do from the whale, which does not become rancid or smell stale. There are certain stones in its head which are used as a remedy for pain from calculus and pain in the side. It is killed while feeding on the herbage along the border of rivers or of the sea; it is also caught while young in nets, but on account of the difficulty in getting it and the scanty profit that it brings in, besides the risks and dangers that must be run, there is not much trouble taken to look for it and hunt it. Father Joseph told me he had seen the tusks of the one taken and that they were very thick, and long in proportion.

The following day we came in sight of a mountain which the sailors have called Roland's Table<sup>1</sup> because of its height and the various clefts in its summit. Then we

<sup>1</sup>Perhaps a local name for some peak in the Pyrenees of which the Basque fishermen were reminded by this Canadian mountain, now known as Mount Sainte-Anne.

gradually approached land as far up as Gaspé, which is reckoned to be in forty and two-thirds degrees of latitude,<sup>1</sup> and there we anchored for a few days. This was a great comfort to us, for, besides our longing and need for getting to a fire because of the dampness of the sea, the atmosphere of the land seemed to us very soothing. All the bay was so full of whales that at last they became very tiresome to us and hindered our rest by their continual movement and the noise of their spouting. Our sailors caught a great number of lobsters, trout, and other different kinds of fish, some of them very ugly, like toads.

All the country here is very mountainous and high almost everywhere, an ungrateful and unproductive soil, bearing nothing but spruce and birch, with few other trees. Facing the roadstead, in a situation rather high up, a little garden has been made which the sailors cultivate when they come. They sow in it sorrel and other small herbs, which are used in making soup.<sup>2</sup> What is more opportune and refreshing, next to the fishing and the hunting, which is moderately good, is a fine stream of fresh water, very good for drinking. It comes down to the sea at the harbour from the top of the high mountains opposite. On the summit of these I was walking once to get the view of the mouth of the great river St. Lawrence up which we were to sail in going to Tadoussac, and after passing round this tongue of land and Gaspé cape I saw some hares and partridges like those I have seen since in the country of our Hurons. As I was desirous of always being occupied in some work of piety and one which should give me renewed earnestness in

<sup>1</sup>The *Histoire* corrects this to 48 degrees.

<sup>2</sup>The *Histoire* adds, "while they are fishing and drying cod on the beach".



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carrying out my purpose, I scratched crosses and the name of Jesus with the point of a knife in the bark of the largest trees, to signify to Satan and his imps that we were taking possession of that land for the Kingdom of Jesus Christ and that henceforth he should have no more power and that the only true God should be known and worshipped.

Then leaving our large vessel in harbour and having given directions for the cod-fishing, we embarked in a pinnace named the *Magdalen* to go to Tadoussac, and set sail. Having doubled the cape only on the third day, because of the contrary winds and tides, and keeping close to the coast on our left, we passed very high land and then the Notre Dame mountains,<sup>1</sup> still at that date partly covered with snow, although there was none left elsewhere. Now the sailors, who as a rule want only to laugh and make sport as a means of alleviating and forgetting the ills they have passed through, here perform some absurd rites directed at newcomers, and the clergy have not yet been able to put a stop to them. One of them plays the part of a priest who pretends to confess the newcomer, muttering some words between his teeth, then with a bowl or large wooden platter pours a quantity of water over his head, with other rites worthy of sailors. But in order to get release from them quickly and to escape greater severity one must pay with a bottle or so of wine or brandy or else expect to be well soaked. And if you think fit to take it amiss or struggle, you get your head and shoulders plunged into a great tub of water placed there for the purpose. This I saw done to a tall

<sup>1</sup>The *Histoire* adds, "which are about twenty-five leagues in length". This eastern part of the range, rising to a height of nearly 4,000 feet, is now called the Shickshock mountains, from a Micmac word meaning "rocky".



lad who thought of resisting in presence of the captain and of all who took part in the ceremony; but as it is all done for diversion in accordance with ancient custom they will not have anyone too haughty to be subject to the law; he must submit to it cheerfully and willingly, I mean lay persons and those of inferior station, on whom alone this law is enforced.

The island of Anticosti,<sup>1</sup> about thirty or forty leagues in length, on which it is said there are white bears of enormous size, which eat men as they do in Norway, was on our right hand, and after that low flat land covered with spruce and other small trees as far as the roadstead of Tadoussac. That island and Gaspé cape opposite form the mouth of this river which we call the St. Lawrence, remarkable as being one of the finest rivers in the world, as persons in that country have admitted to me who had made the journey to the Moluccas and Antipodes. At its mouth, as far as one can infer and judge, it is nearly twenty or twenty-five leagues wide and more than 200 fathoms in depth, and it is known to extend for more than 800 leagues. After 400 leagues it is still as wide as the greatest rivers we have seen, filled in some places with innumerable islands and rocks. For my own part I can safely say that the narrowest spot I have seen is more than three or four times the width of the river Seine, and I don't think I am mistaken; and, what is more wonderful, some persons consider that this river has its source in one of the lakes met with along its course, and so, if such is the case, there must be two

<sup>1</sup>The *Histoire* adds, "in latitude 50°". The island is north-east of Gaspé peninsula, 135 miles in length and 35 in breadth. The westerly point is about 13 miles from the north shore of the St. Lawrence and about 200 miles east of Tadoussac.

effluents, one eastward towards France, the other westward towards the Southern sea. And it seems to me probable that the lake of the Shequaneronons<sup>1</sup> has also two opposite outlets, one a large river which flows into the great lake of the Hurons, and another a small one quite at the opposite side which flows down and makes its way in the direction of Quebec, losing itself in a lake into which it comes seven or eight leagues from its source. This was the way by which my savages brought me back from the Hurons to reach our great St. Lawrence river leading to Quebec.

We continued our journey, sailing along our beautiful river, and a few days later we reached the roadstead of Tadoussac,<sup>2</sup> a league from the harbour, and 100 leagues from the mouth of the river, which at this place is not more than seven or eight leagues wide. Next day we doubled Cape Aux Vaches and entered the harbour; this is as far up as large vessels can go, for which reason pinnaces and shallops are kept there on purpose to unload ships and carry the necessary goods to Quebec, there being still about fifty leagues to go by the river; for to think of going by land is beyond expectation, or at any rate it seems impossible on account of the high mountains, rocks, and precipices which one would have to face and pass. This place Tadoussac is a sort of cove at the mouth of the Saguenay river where there is a tide quite remarkable for its rapidity, and sometimes there

<sup>1</sup>Lake Nipissing. The St. Lawrence river flows out of Lake Ontario and drains the five Great Lakes. Early explorers hoped to find a river flowing out of one of the lakes to the western or southern sea. Lake Nipissing discharges its waters by the French river into Lake Huron.

<sup>2</sup>Tadoussac and its surroundings are fully described also by Champlain (*Works, passim*, Champlain Society, 1922-36), and Sagard seems to have copied Champlain's wording in parts of this description.

come violent winds bringing with them intense cold. On this account it is colder there than in many other places some degrees further from the sun.

The harbour<sup>1</sup> is small, and only about twenty or twenty-five vessels at most could find shelter in it. There is water enough, and it is well sheltered from the river Saguenay by a small rocky island almost cut off by the sea. The rest [of the shore] is high mountains, with little soil, mostly rock and sand covered with such trees as spruce and birch, then a little meadow with woods round it, just touching the little rocky island. On the right towards Quebec is the beautiful Saguenay river, bounded on both sides by high barren mountains. It is of incredible depth, about 150 or 200 fathoms, half a league wide in places, and a quarter at its mouth, where the current is so strong that at three-quarter flood-tide in the river it is still running out. For this reason there is great danger either that its current may beat back a ship and hinder it from entering the harbour or that the strong tide may drag the ship into the river, as happened once to M. de Pontgravé<sup>2</sup> who was all but lost, as he told us, because he could not find bottom and was unable to get clear of the tide, his anchors being useless and all human devices; but the special help of God alone saved him and prevented his unlucky ship from being wrecked.

In the roadstead of Tadoussac, at the place called the Point Aux Vaches,<sup>3</sup> there was a Canadian village placed

<sup>1</sup>The *Histoire* adds, "in latitude forty-eight and two-thirds".

<sup>2</sup>François Pontgravé or Dupont-Gravé, sailor and trader, was first in charge at Port Royal in Acadia, and later played an important part on the St. Lawrence until 1629. See Champlain, *Works*, *passim*, and H. P. Biggar, *Early Trading Companies of New France* (Toronto, 1901).

<sup>3</sup>Champlain gives the name as Pointe aux Roches in his 1632 Voyage. But see Champlain, *Works*, vol. IV, p. 39, note.

on the top of the mountain, and fortified for fear of their enemies in the simple and ordinary manner of the Hurons. The ship having cast anchor there, to wait until wind and tide should be suitable for entering the harbour, I landed to visit the village, and entered the cabins of the savages whom I found very polite. I sat down with them occasionally and took pleasure in their little ways of doing things and in watching their women at work, some staining<sup>1</sup> and painting their robes, others sewing their bowls of tree-bark, and making many other pretty little things with the quills of porcupines stained crimson red. To be sure I found their food wretched and very undesirable, as I was not accustomed to these savage dishes, although they offered it to me with a courtesy and politeness far from savage, and likewise a little river-water to drink, which they had in a very unclean pot, and which I declined with humble thanks. After that I went off to the harbour by the path through the woods, along with some Frenchmen whom I had for company. But we had scarcely arrived there and got on board our pinnace when a misfortune nearly befell us. This was the way it happened. The principal chief of the savages, whom we call La Forière,<sup>2</sup> having come to visit us on our pinnace and being dissatisfied with the small present of figs that our captain made him when he left the vessel, threw them into the river in anger and counselled his savages to come on to our ship one after another and take and carry off from it all the goods they needed, and give in exchange as few peltries as they liked, since we

<sup>1</sup>For discussion of the Micmac word *matichier* see LeClercq, *New Relation of Gaspésie* (Champlain Society, 1910), p. 89.

<sup>2</sup>La Forière, or Ferrière, played a considerable part in Indian politics. He is also called Erouachy, and appears frequently under both names in Champlain's *Works*.

had not given him what satisfied him. So they all came on with such insolent boldness that they opened the hatchway<sup>1</sup> themselves and took out from between decks what they wanted, only giving in furs for it what they chose, without anyone being able to hinder or resist them. It was our misfortune to have allowed too many at a time to come on board, considering how few we were, for at that time we were only six or seven, the rest of the crew having been sent elsewhere. That made our people sing small and allow the savages their way, for fear of being killed or thrown into the river, for which they sought an occasion or some fair excuse, so as to be able to do it openly and without blame.

In the evening when all our crew had returned the savages, through fear, or sorry for the wrong they had done to the French, took counsel together and discussed wherein and to what extent they might have defrauded [the French], and having levied an assessment upon themselves brought skins to the value, and more than the value, of the loss they had inflicted. These were accepted, and a promise given to forget all that had passed and continue always on the old friendly terms, and by way of assurance and to ratify the treaty of peace two cannon-shots were fired and we made them drink a little wine. This settlement gave them great satisfaction and us even more; for to speak truth we are more afraid of not satisfying the savages than they are of offending the merchants. The savages' chief begged me hard to give him our Cross and rosary, which he called Jesus (the very

<sup>1</sup>The French text has *les coutils*, which would require the translation to read "opened the wrappings", but it seems more likely that the text should have been *l'escouille*, and this conjectural emendation is adopted in the translation.

name they give to the sun), to hang round his neck, but I could not give it to him, being in a place where I was unable to obtain another.

During the few days that we were there we caught a great quantity of herrings and small sea-urchins which we collected on the sea-shore and ate as if they were oysters. Some people in France think that the fresh herring dies the moment it leaves its own element, yet I have seen them alive and jumping on the deck for a little space of time and then dying. The seals sometimes devoured even in our nets the herrings caught, without our being able to prevent them, and were so clever and cunning that they sometimes put their heads out of water to guard against being surprised and to see on which side were the fishermen, and then they would dive again; and at night we often heard their cries, which were almost like those of screech-owls (a fact contrary to the opinion of those who have said and written that fishes have no voice).

Near there, on the way to Quebec, is the island of Larks,<sup>1</sup> so called from the immense number found on it sometimes. Some live ones have been in my hands; they have the little crest on top of the head like ours, but they are slightly smaller, with plumage a little more grey and not so dark, but the flesh tastes the same. Most of this island is almost covered with sand, so that one kills a great number by a single harquebus shot; for when it is fired at the level of the ground the sand kills more than the powder and shot; this is vouched for by a man who with a single shot killed three hundred and more. On this same journey up to Quebec we found

<sup>1</sup>Isle aux Allouettes, Lark island, off Pointe aux Allouettes on the south side of the mouth of the Saguenay river.

also in various places many large schools of porpoises, their whole body entirely and perfectly white like snow. They were playing near one another, and as they raised themselves they showed all together a part of their great body out of water; it is almost as thick as that of a cow and proportionately long. On account of the weight, and because the fish is of no value except to extract the oil, the amusement of fishing for it is not practised. Nowhere else did we see them white or so big, for those in the sea are black, good to eat, and much smaller. On the way there were also wonderful echoes which repeat and resound words so loudly and distinctly that not a single syllable is omitted, and you would say with reason that they were people imitating or repeating what you spoke and sang.

After that we passed close along Coudres island (Hazel island), which may be about a league and a half in length. It is fairly level and tapers off towards both ends, quite pretty from the woods which surround it, and about half a league distant from the north shore. From Coudres island keeping close to the land we came to Cape Tourmente seven or eight leagues distant from Quebec. It is so named because, however little wind there may be, the water is rough there as in the open sea. At this point the water begins to be fresh, and those who live at Quebec during the winter come here to cut and gather up the hay that grows on these great meadows in its season, for the cattle of the settlement. Thence we went on to the island of Orleans, two leagues off, on the south side of which are a number of islands, low, tree-covered, and very pleasant, filled with large meadows and much game, some about two leagues long, others a little more or less. Round about these are many rocks

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and shoals, very dangerous to sail through, about two leagues distant from the mainland on the south. Here begins the fine fertile country of the great river. Off the end of this island there is a fall or torrent of water called Montmorency, on the north main shore, which falls into the great river with great noise and impetuosity. It comes from a lake about ten or twelve leagues in the interior and falls from an elevation nearly twenty-five fathoms high, beyond which the land is level and pleasant to look at, though in the interior, but several leagues away, high mountains are visible.



### CHAPTER III

#### *Quebec, the residence of the French and of the Recollect Fathers*

FROM the island of Orleans we see Quebec full in front of us built on the bank of narrows in the great St. Lawrence river, which at this spot is only about a good quarter-league in breadth, at the foot of a mountain, on the summit of which is the small wooden fort built for the defence of the country and of Quebec or the merchants' house. The latter is at present quite a fine dwelling, surrounded by a wall in the form of a square, with two small turrets at the angles which have recently been added for the safety of the place. There is another dwelling on the top of the height, in a very convenient spot<sup>1</sup> where a number of cattle brought from France are pastured. There also are sown every year much Indian corn and peas,<sup>2</sup> which are given later to the savages in trade for furs. In this uncultivated place I saw a young apple-tree, brought there from Normandy, laden with exceedingly fine apples, also young vines which were very luxuriant, and abundance of other small things betokening the richness of the soil. Our small convent<sup>3</sup> is half a league distant in a very fine situation and one as pleasing as can be found, near a little river having an ebb and

<sup>1</sup>The *Histoire* adds, "It was built there by Hébert, who is dead, and his wife and children pasture a number of cattle".

<sup>2</sup>The French text has *bois*, an obvious misprint for *pois*.

<sup>3</sup>The *Histoire* adds, "consecrated to God and our Lady of the Angels".

flow, which we call the St. Charles. It is in our little river that the savages catch an immense number of eels in the autumn, and the French kill the game-birds which come to it in quantity. The little meadows which border it are bespangled in summer with many small flowers, particularly with what we call cardinals,<sup>1</sup> and matagon lilies,<sup>2</sup> bearing a number of blossoms on one stalk, nearly six, seven, or eight feet high; the savages eat the bulb, roasting it in ashes, and it is quite good. We brought some to France, along with some cardinal plants, as rare flowers, but they did not succeed nor come to perfection as they do in their own climate and native soil.

Our orchard-garden is also very fine, with a good bottom soil, for all our herbs and roots do well, better than in many gardens we have in France. If it were not for the countless number of mosquitoes and midges there, as there are everywhere in Canada during the summer, I do not know that one could find a pleasanter abode; for besides the beauty and fertility of the countryside and the fine air, our dwelling is very convenient for those it shelters, yet it resembles rather the house of one of our rural nobility than a monastery of Friars Minor. We have been forced to build it in that fashion as well because of our poverty as to defend ourselves in any event against the savages, if they should try to turn us out. The building is in the middle of the court-yard, like a keep; the curtain walls and ramparts are of wood, with four little bastions of the same material at the four corners, raised from twelve to fifteen feet above the level of the ground, in which little gardens have been planted and arranged. The gate has a square tower above it built of stone, which serves us as a chapel, and a fine

<sup>1</sup>The scarlet lobelia.

<sup>2</sup>The tiger-lily.

natural moat surrounds the house and adjoining garden and the rest of the enclosure, which covers about six or seven acres, or rather more in my judgment. The raspberry-bushes round about attract so many turtle-doves<sup>1</sup> at the fruit season that it is delightful to see trees quite filled with them; moreover the Frenchmen of the habitation often come to pick the fruit, as it is the best place and involves least trouble. If our brethren wish to go to Quebec, or people of Quebec to come to us, there is a choice of ways, by land or by water, according to the weather and the season; and this is no small convenience, of which the savages also avail themselves to come and see us and to receive instructions from us concerning the way to Heaven and the knowledge of a God made man, as to whom they have hitherto been in ignorance. It is calculated that this place Quebec is in latitude 46 and a half degrees, nearly two degrees farther south than Paris, and yet the winter is longer and the country colder, partly because of a wind from the north-west which brings frightful cold when it blows, and partly because the country is almost uninhabited and uncultivated, and this through the negligence and lack of interest of the merchants who hitherto have been satisfied to get furs and profit out of it without having been willing to make any outlay for cultivation, settlement, or progress of the country. This is the reason they have done little more for it than at the first day, for fear, they say, lest the Spaniards should turn them out if they had made it a more valuable land. But this is a very feeble excuse, by no means admissible by persons of sense and experience, who know very well that establishments could be made and fortified, if there was any willingness to incur

<sup>1</sup>*Tourterelle*, the passenger-pigeon.

the necessary expense, so that they could not be driven out of them by any enemy. But if they will do nothing more than in the past Antarctic France will always be a name of fancy, and ourselves an imaginary possession in others' hands. Also the conversion of the savages will be always incomplete, for it can only be accomplished through the aid of some settlements<sup>1</sup> of good and virtuous Christians, together with the teaching and example of good monks.

After we had had two or three days of refreshment with our brethren in our little convent, we went up in the pinnacles by the same river St. Lawrence as far as Cape Victory,<sup>2</sup> which the Hurons call Onthrandéen, for the

<sup>1</sup>The French text has *colonnes*, probably a misprint for *colonies*.

<sup>2</sup>The name has disappeared as attached to any particular point. It appears to have been applied to the place at which Champlain assisted the Algonquins in an attack on an Iroquois fort (see Champlain, *Works*, vol. IV, pp. 107 *et seq.*). Champlain speaks of crossing "the river" to make the attack and this river has been taken to be the St. Lawrence, as in a note to the text in the Champlain Society's edition of Champlain's *Works*. But he has previously been speaking of the Richelieu river, and it seems more likely that it was the Richelieu river that he crossed near its mouth, as the Iroquois would be unlikely to have a fort on the opposite bank of the St. Lawrence from which their retreat up the Richelieu river into their own territory might easily be cut off. This view is supported by the Jesuit *Relation* of 1645-6, written by Jérôme Lalemant, in which he identifies the place where Father de Noue's body was found as "au Cap nommé de Massacre à une lieue plus haut que Richelieu". Richelieu, or Fort Richelieu, has become Sorel, so Cap de Massacre, or Cap de la Victoire as it was also called, must have been on the south bank of the St. Lawrence three or four miles above the mouth of the Richelieu river. Sagard's description at the beginning of Chapter IV is far from clear, especially where he speaks of the river of the Ignierhonons coming in "on the left of Cape Victory". This seems to mean up-stream from Cape Victory, but there is no river that enters the St. Lawrence from the south above the Richelieu river for many miles. In the *Histoire*, his account is different. He says that they entered the harbour of Cape Victory, and that from there is visible the river of the Ignierhonons "vis-à-vis du port", whatever that may imply. But in spite of Sagard there can be no doubt that Cape Victory or Massacre was on the south shore of the St. Lawrence, three or four miles above Sorel. See Laverdière's edition of Champlain, vol. I, p. 367, note.

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trading. For there a great number of savages of different tribes were encamped. But before reaching it we passed the place called Sainte-Croix, then Three Rivers; this is very fine country, full of many fine trees, and level and very pretty all the way as far as the beginning of the St. Louis rapid, a journey of more than sixty or seventy leagues from Quebec. From Three Rivers we passed through Lake St. Peter, about eight leagues in length and four in width, the water of which is almost without current and full of fish, and then on St. Magdalen's day we came to Cape Victory.

## CHAPTER IV

*From Cape Victory to the Hurons, and how the savages manage when they travel through the country*

THIS place, Cape Victory or Massacre, is twelve or fifteen leagues on this side of the Prairies river,<sup>1</sup> so called from the number of low islands and pleasant meadows in the river and in a beautiful large lake [in its course]. The river of the Iroquois comes in on the left,<sup>2</sup> and the river of the Ignierhonons, an Iroquois tribe, on the left of Cape Victory.<sup>3</sup> All this country-side is very pleasing and suitable as a situation for towns; the land is unbroken and level, but with rather sandy soil, the rivers have fish in them, and hunting and climate are very good. Moreover, on account of the size and depth of the river, pinnaces can sail on it when the wind is fair, and in default of a fair wind oars can be used.

To return now to Cape Victory, the river at this point is only about half a league wide, and as soon as you

<sup>1</sup>The Ottawa river before it reaches the St. Lawrence divides, the main river continuing its course south-eastward, while two smaller streams issue from the eastern end of the Lake of Two Mountains and turn to the north-east, uniting shortly before their joint outlet into the St. Lawrence north of Montreal. The southerly of these two subsidiary streams is now called Rivière des Prairies, but the mention of islands in the river suggests that the northern branch, the Rivière des Mille Isles, is what Sagard understood to be the Rivière des Prairies. The lake is the Lake of Two Mountains.

<sup>2</sup>The Richelieu river, flowing from Lake Champlain.

<sup>3</sup>The identification of this river is uncertain. The name suggests a river entering the St. Lawrence from the south, the Iroquois country.

enter it [from Lake St. Peter] you see six or seven islands in a row, very pretty and covered with fine woods. When the Hurons had done their trading there and had agreed for a few small gifts to take us to their country we set out, Father Joseph,<sup>1</sup> Father Nicolas,<sup>2</sup> and I, along with them, having first invoked the aid of our Lord, praying Him to guide us and grant a fortunate and successful termination of our journey, and that all might tend to His glory, our salvation, and the profit and conversion of these poor folk.

But since the Hurons only group themselves five or six together in each canoe, since these little vessels cannot hold more along with their goods, we had necessarily to part company and make our arrangements separately each of us with one of these groups in their small canoe. Thus they brought us into their country, and on the way we saw one another only on the first two days, when I and my party shared Father Joseph's encampment, after that no more, until several weeks after our arrival in the Huron country. As for Father Nicolas I came upon him for the first time about 200 leagues from Quebec in the midst of a tribe which we call the Epiceriny<sup>3</sup> or Sorcerers, but in Huron language they are called Squekaneronons.

Our first night's lodging was at the Rivière des Prairies, which is five leagues below the St. Louis rapid,<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Joseph Le Caron, who had gone to the Hurons in 1615 and spent a winter with them.

<sup>2</sup>Nicolas Viel. He was drowned, along with a Huron convert, in June 1625, at the rapids in the Rivière des Prairies since known as Sault-au-Recollet. It was supposed that three Huron Indians in whose company Father Nicolas was travelling had murdered them, throwing the two into the rapid, but Sagard (*infra*, p. 252) alludes to the death of Father Nicolas as if it were accidental.

<sup>3</sup>Champlain calls them Piserenis (vol. III, p. 131), Pisirinins (vol. III, p. 104), or Pisierinij (vol. III, p. 171), *i.e.*, the Nipissings.

<sup>4</sup>Lachine rapid.

and there we found other savages already encamped. They were feasting on a big bear which they had surprised and chased into the river; it thought to escape to the neighbouring islands but the swiftness of the canoes enabled them to overtake it and it was killed with discharges of arrows and with clubs. These savages at their feast, hugging the kettle, were singing all together, then alternately, a song so sweet and pleasing that I was quite amazed and carried away with admiration. Indeed since then I have heard nothing more admirable among them, for their usual singing is quite disagreeable.

We encamped quite near them and cooked a meal in the Huron manner, but I could not yet eat their *sagamité*, not on that occasion, being unaccustomed to it, and so I had to lie down without supper, for they had also eaten up on the way a little bag of sea-biscuit which I had taken from the pinnaces supposing that it would last me until I reached the Hurons; but they found it so good that they left nothing remaining for the next day. Our bed was the bare earth, with a stone for my pillow, which is more than our men had as they are not accustomed to have their heads higher than their feet. Our house was two pieces of birch-bark laid against four little poles that were stuck into the ground and arranged so as to slope over us. As their practices and their mode of living when they take a journey are almost always the same, I shall now briefly describe how they conduct themselves on such occasions.

In order to practise patience in good earnest and to endure hardships beyond the limit of human strength it is only necessary to make journeys with the savages, and long ones especially, such as we did; because, besides the danger of death on the way, one must make up one's



mind to endure and suffer more than could be imagined, from hunger, from the stench that these dirty disagreeable fellows emit almost constantly in their canoes, which is enough to disgust one utterly with such unpleasant companions, from sleeping always on the bare ground in the open country, from walking with great labour in water and bogs and in some places over rocks, and through dark thick woods, from rain on one's back and all the evils that the season and weather can inflict, and from being bitten by a countless swarm of mosquitoes and midges, together with difficulties of language in explaining clearly and showing them one's needs, and having no Christian beside one for communication and consolation in the midst of one's toil. Yet for that matter the savages are quite kind, at least mine were, indeed more so than are many people more civilized and less savage; for when they saw me for several days almost unable to eat their *sagamité*, so dirtily and badly cooked, they had some compassion for me and encouraged and helped me as well as they could, and what they could was not much. This to me was all to the good, for I had resolved early to endure gladly what God might be pleased to send me, either death or life; wherefore I kept quite cheerful in spite of my great weakness, and often sang hymns for my spiritual comfort and to please my savages, who sometimes asked me to do so, for they do not like to see people sad or peevish, nor yet impatient, because they themselves are far more patient than our Frenchmen commonly are, as I have witnessed on innumerable occasions. This gave me much to reflect on, and made me wonder at their firmness and the control they have of their feelings, and how well they can bear with one another and support and help one another if

need be. And I can truly say that I found more good in them than I had imagined, and that the example of their patience often led me to force myself more resolutely to endure with cheerfulness and courage everything vexatious that happened to me, for the love of God and the edification of my neighbour.

Now when they were in the open country and the hour for encamping arrived, they would seek some fitting spot on the bank of a river for a camp, or in another place where dry wood could easily be found to make a fire; then one of them set himself to look for it and collect it, another to put up the lodge and find a stick on which to hang the kettle at the fire, another to look for two flat stones for crushing the Indian corn over a skin spread out on the ground, and afterwards to put it into the kettle and boil it. When it was boiled quite clear it was all served in bowls of birch-bark which with this object we carried each one for himself, and also large spoons like small dishes, which are used for eating this broth, *sagamité*, in the evening and in the morning, the only times in the day when the kettle is boiled, that is to say, after pitching camp in the evening and before starting in the morning. Sometimes also we did without it when we were in a hurry to set out, and sometimes we boiled it before daylight. If two groups used the same lodge each one boiled its own kettle, then all ate together, one kettle after the other, without any discussion or contention, and every man had his share of both. As for me I satisfied myself as a rule with the *sagamité* which pleased me best, although in both there was always dirt and refuse, partly because they used fresh stones every day, and very dirty ones, to crush the corn. Besides, the bowls could hardly have a pleasant smell, for when they were under the

necessity of making water in their canoe they usually used the bowl for the purpose; but on land they used to stoop down in some place apart with a decency and modesty that were anything but savage.

Sometimes they made a meal of Indian corn uncrushed, and though it was always very hard, on account of the difficulty of getting it [thoroughly] cooked, it agreed with me better at first, because I took the grains one by one, and in this way masticated it thoroughly and at my leisure while walking or in the canoe. In places on the river and the lakes where they thought they might catch fish they dragged behind them a line, putting on and fastening to the hook a piece of skin cut from a frog, and sometimes they caught fish with it, which gave a taste to the pot. But when not pressed for time, as on their way down to trade, some of them after having made their evening camp would go and set their nets in the river, in which they often caught good fish, such as pike, sturgeon, and carp<sup>1</sup> (not like ours however, neither so good nor so big) and several other kinds of fish which we have not got here.

The Indian corn which we ate on our journey they would go and fetch every second day in certain secluded places where on their way down they had hidden it in little bags made of birch-bark; for it would have been too much trouble to be always carrying, each for himself, all the corn needed for their journey. It astonished me greatly how they could identify so accurately all the places where they had hidden it, without making any mistake, although sometimes it was far away from the trail and in the depth of the woods or buried in the sand.

<sup>1</sup>*Carpe*, a kind of sucker, to which the name is still applied in the province of Quebec.

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Their method and contrivance for kindling fire, practised by all the tribes of savages, are as follows. They take two sticks of willow, lime, or some other kind of tree, dry and light, then cut one to about the length of an ell or a little less, and an inch wide or thereabouts, and on the broad edge of it slightly hollowed they make a little pit with the point of a knife or a beaver's tooth, and a little notch beside it to carry down upon an end of cotton match, or other stuff quick to take fire, the burning powder which was to fall from the hole. They put the point of another stick of the same wood, as thick as your little finger, or a little less, into this hole that has been started, and kneeling on the end of the broader stick on the ground they twist the other between their hands so quickly and so long that the two pieces of wood are well heated, and the powder that comes away as a result of this continuous movement is converted into fire, with which they light one end of their dry cord, and this holds the fire like the match of a harquebus. After that with a few small pieces of dry wood they make a fire to boil the pot. But it must be noted that not every kind of wood is suitable to draw fire from, only the special kind which the savages know how to select. Now when they find difficulty in drawing fire from it, they crumble a little charcoal into the hole or a little powdery dry wood which they take from some stump. If they have no broad stick, such as I have described, they take two round sticks and tie them together at the two ends, and when they kneel on them to hold them they set between them the point of another stick of the same wood, shaped like a weaver's shuttle, and twist it by the other end between their hands as I have described.

To return then to our journey, we only boiled the

kettle twice a day, and as I was not able to eat much of it at one time, being as yet unaccustomed to the fare, it may be supposed that I suffered greatly from want, more than my savages who were used to this mode of dining, and besides, smoking quite often during the day deadened their hunger.

The humane conduct of my host was remarkable. Although his only covering was a bear's skin he made me share it when it was raining at night, without my asking; and in the evening he even arranged a place for me to sleep on at night, laying upon it a few small branches<sup>1</sup> and a little reed mat which it is their custom to carry for their own use on long journeys. In compassion for my difficulties and weakness he would not let me row or wield a paddle, and this was no small labour from which to relieve me, in addition to doing me the service of carrying my things and my bundle at the rapids, although he was already well laden with his own goods and with the canoe, which he carried on his shoulder over the vexatious and painful trails. One day when I took the lead, as I usually did while the savages were unloading the canoe, because although laden they stepped out much more quickly, just as I was getting near a lake I felt the earth shake under me like an island floating on water; indeed I drew back from it very gently and went to a great rock near by to wait for my companions, for fear of some mishap befalling me. Sometimes also we had to pass through troublesome bogs from which we could only disengage ourselves with great labour; in particular there was a certain marsh beside a lake into which one might easily sink over one's head, as happened to a Frenchman who was so engulfed that if he had not had his legs wide apart

<sup>1</sup>The *Histoire* adds, "of cedar".

he would have been in great danger, and as it was he sank up to his waist. Sometimes also one has great difficulty in making a passage with head and hands through dense woods, in which also a great number of trees that have rotted and fallen on one another are met with, and these one must step over. Then there are rocks and stones and other obstacles which add to the toil of the trail, besides the innumerable mosquitoes which incessantly waged most cruel and vexatious war upon us; if it had not been for my care in protecting my eyes by means of a piece of thin stuff which I had covering my face, these fierce creatures would have blinded me many times, as I had been warned. It had happened so to others, who lost the use of their eyes for several days, so poisonous is their stinging and biting to those who have not yet become acclimatized. Nevertheless in spite of all pains in protecting myself from them I did not fail to have face, hands, and legs bitten. Among the Hurons, because their country is open and settled, there are not so many mosquitoes, except in the woods and places where there is no wind during the great heat of summer.

We passed through several tribes of savages but we only stayed a night with each, so as to proceed on our way without pause, except among the Epicerinys or Sorcerers, where we halted for two days, both to rest from the fatigue of the journey and to do some trading with that tribe. It was there that I came upon Father Nicolas near the lake, where he was waiting for me. This happy encounter and the sight of each other gave us much joy, and we received mutual comfort, along with some other Frenchmen, during the short time our people stayed there. Our feast consisted of a little fish that we had and boiled pumpkins, which I found more delicious

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than any food I had ever eaten, so exhausted and worn out was I with hunger. Then we had to set out, each separately with his own company. This tribe of Epicerinys is called Sorcerer because of the great number of these among them, and of those magicians<sup>1</sup> who profess to converse with the devil in little round towers isolated and apart,<sup>2</sup> which they build on purpose to receive oracles in them and to predict or learn something from their master. They are also in the habit of casting spells and inflicting certain diseases which are only cured by another special spell and remedy. There are some of those so stricken from whose body serpents issue and long bowels, and sometimes these come out half way only and then re-enter; all which things are devilish inventions of the wicked sorcerers. But apart from their magic spells and communications with demons I found them very kindly and polite.

It was in this village that inadvertently I lost, to my very great regret, all the notes I had made on the countries, journeys, meetings, and remarkable things we had seen from Dieppe in Normandy up to that point, and I was only made aware of it after meeting two canoes with savages of the Forest tribe.<sup>3</sup> This tribe is a far distant one and dependent on the High Hairs.<sup>4</sup> They wear no covering of their nakedness at all except during extreme cold and on long journeys, when they are obliged to use a

<sup>1</sup>The *Histoire* has "Pirotois and magicians".

<sup>2</sup>The *Histoire* adds, "in the woods or in the very midst of their lodges".

<sup>3</sup>*Nation des Bois*, a northern branch of the Chippewa Indians, living northeast of Lake Superior and west of Lake Nipissing, but sometimes ranging as far east as the Ottawa river.

<sup>4</sup>*Cheveux-Relevés*, the Missisauga, a division of the Chippewa, living at the time when Sagard wrote along the north shore of Lake Huron and on Manitoulin island. Sagard gives their Indian name a couple of pages later. (See Champlain, *Works*, vol. III, p. 43.)

covering of skins. They wear round the neck little collars made of feathers and they have the same ornament in their hair. Their faces are painted in different colours with oil, very prettily; some had one side all green, the other all red, others appeared to have the whole face covered with natural lace-work, and others again were quite different. Their custom is to paint and stain themselves, especially when they are approaching or passing through another tribe, just as my savages had done when arriving among the Squekaneronons. This is the reason why they carry their pigments and oil with them on a journey, and also because of feasts, dances, or other assemblies, in order to appear more handsome and attract the attention of on-lookers.

The next day after we had come upon these savages we stopped for some time at an Algonquin village, and hearing a great noise I was curious enough to look through a chink in a lodge to find out what it was about. There within I saw (as I have since seen many times among the Hurons on similar occasions) a number of men divided into two companies sitting on the ground and disposed along the two sides of the lodge; each company had in front of them a long flat piece of wood, three or four inches broad, and every man had a stick in his hand and kept continually striking this flat piece of wood in time to the sound of the tortoise-shells and of several songs which they sang at the top of their voices. The Loki or medicine man, who was at the upper end with his large tortoise-shell in his hand, began and the others followed at the top of their voices; it was like a witches' Sabbath, a regular hubbub and concert of demons. Two women meanwhile were holding a naked child, belly uppermost, near them and opposite to the Loki. After a little time



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the Loki approached the child on all fours, yelling and howling like a mad bull, then he puffed at the child round about its private parts, and after that they began their uproar and ritual again, which was finished by a feast set out at the end of the lodge. What became of the child, and whether it was cured or not, or whether some other ceremony was added I have not learned since, because we had to leave at once after having eaten and rested a little.

From this tribe we went on to make our camp in a village of Andatahouats, or, as we say, High Hairs, who had come to station themselves near the Freshwater sea with the purpose of bartering with the Hurons and others on their return from the trading at Quebec, and we were there for two days trading and doing business with them. These savages are a tribe who wear their hair fastened up above their forehead, more erect than the wigs of our ladies, and they keep it erect like that by the use of a hot piece of iron or hatchet; and it has not a bad effect. Yet the men do not cover their private parts, but keep them exposed like all the rest of their body without modesty or shame. As for the women they have a small piece of leather almost as large as a table-napkin girded round their loins, which hangs down to mid-thigh, in the same manner as the Huron women have it.

This tribe is a great nation, and most of the men are great warriors, hunters, and fishers. I saw there many women and girls making reed mats extremely well plaited, and ornamented in different colours. These they traded afterwards for other goods with the savages of different regions who came to their village. They lead a nomadic life, except that some of their villages plant

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Indian corn,<sup>1</sup> and they are at war with another tribe called Assitageronon, meaning Fire people;<sup>2</sup> for in the Huron tongue *assista* means fire and *eronon* means tribe. These are about 200 leagues, and more, distant from them. They go in bands into many regions and countries as far off as 400<sup>3</sup> leagues or more (so they told me), and there they trade with their goods and exchange them for furs, pigments, wampum, and other rubbish.

The women live very comfortably with their husbands, and they have this custom, like all other women of wandering peoples, that when they have their monthly sickness they leave their husbands, and the girl leaves her parents and other relatives, and they go to certain isolated huts away from their village; there they live and remain all the time of their sickness without any men in their company. The men bring them food and what they need until their return, if they have not themselves taken provisions enough as they usually do. Among the Hurons and other settled tribes the women and girls do not leave their house or village for such occasions, but they cook their food separately in little pots during that period and do not allow anyone to eat their meats and soups; so that they seem to copy the Jewish women who considered themselves unclean during these periods. I have not been able to find out whence they derive this custom of separating themselves in such a manner, although I think it a very proper one.

<sup>1</sup>The *Histoire* amplifies this: "They are nomads, but some of them build villages in the midst of the woods because it is convenient to build and fortify them there."

<sup>2</sup>*Nation de Feu*, the Potawatomi, living between Lake Huron and Lake Michigan.

<sup>3</sup>The *Histoire* has "500".

## CHAPTER V

### *Our arrival at the Huron country,<sup>1</sup> our occupations, and manner of life and behaviour in that country*

SINCE by the grace of God we have come so far as to be close to the country of our Hurons, it is time now for me to begin a fuller treatment of it and of the way its inhabitants live, not like certain historians who in their descriptions usually mention only the principal matters, and so further embellish them that when one comes to grips with them one cannot see the author's face behind them. For I set down not only the principal things, just as they are, but also the lesser and more insignificant, with the same frankness and simplicity as is habitual with me.

For this reason I beg the reader to find my method of procedure acceptable, and to excuse me if, in order to give a better understanding of the character of our savages, I have been forced to insert here many uncivilized and extravagant details, since one cannot convey complete knowledge of a foreign country or of how it is governed except by showing, along with the good, the evil and the imperfection to be found in it. Otherwise it would not be necessary for me to describe the manners

<sup>1</sup>Sagard passes lightly over the journey up to Huronia, but in Part II, Chapter V, he describes it fully in reverse order when travelling down to Quebec. Champlain's account of the route is in two parts. In his journey up the Ottawa river in 1613 he reached lower Lake Allumette (*Works*, vol. II, pp. 205 *et seq.*). In 1615 he made the further journey to Lake Huron (*ibid.*, vol. III, pp. 34 *et seq.*).

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of savages if there were nothing savage to be seen in them, but [on the contrary] polite and refined habits like [those of] nations civilized by religion and piety, or by magistrates and wise men who through their good laws might have given some shapeliness to the uncouth manners of these barbarous nations, for in them one can discern but little of the light of reason and the purity of a purified nature.

Two days before our arrival among the Hurons we came upon the Freshwater sea, over which we passed from island to island, and landed in the country so greatly longed for on Sunday, the festival of St. Bernard, about midday, with the sun beating down perpendicularly upon us. The savages, having thrust their canoe into a wood near by, loaded me with my clothes and bundles which before they had always carried on the trails. The reason was the great distance from here to the town and because they were already more than sufficiently burdened with their goods. So I carried my bundle, with very great difficulty both on account of its weight and the excessive heat and from the great weakness and debility that I had for a long time been feeling in all my limbs. Furthermore, because they made me take the lead according to their custom, for the reason that I could not keep up to them except with great trouble, I lost the right track and found myself alone for a long time, not knowing whither I was going. At last, after having walked far across country, I found two Huron women near a cross-road and asked them which way to take to get to the town whither I was bound; I did not know the name of it, still less which of the two roads I ought to take. These poor women took enough trouble to make themselves understood, but there was no way of doing so. Finally, through

the inspiration of God, I took the right road, and at the end of some time found my savages sitting in the shade under a tree in a fine large meadow where they were awaiting me, much troubled as to what had become of me. They made me sit down beside them and gave me stalks of Indian corn to suck which they had gathered in a field near by. I observed the way they used them and found them quite good to suck. After that, as I passed through another field full of beans<sup>1</sup> I picked a dishful of them, which I afterwards had boiled in our hut, although the pods were already rather hard; this served us for a second feast after our arrival.

As soon as I was seen from our town of Quieuindahian,<sup>2</sup> otherwise called Téqueunonkiayé, a place quite well fortified in their fashion, and capable of containing two or three hundred households in the thirty or forty lodges in it, there arose so great an uproar throughout the town that everybody left the lodges to come and see me, and so I was brought with great enthusiasm right into the lodge of my savage, and since the crowd was very great in it I was forced to get on top of the platform to escape the pressure of the crowd. The parents of my savage gave me a very kind reception in their own way, and with extraordinary caresses showed me how pleased and glad they were at my coming. They treated me as kindly as they did their own child, and gave me abundant cause to praise God, when I saw how benevolent and faithful these

<sup>1</sup>*Fexolles* or *fasioles*, wild beans.

<sup>2</sup>Father A. E. Jones, S. J., in *Old Huronia* (5th Report of the Bureau of Archives, Ontario, 1908) has made a detailed study of the sites of the Huron villages and most of them are now marked by enduring memorials. See also Andrew F. Hunter, *Notes on the Sites of Huron Villages in the Township of Tiny, Simcoe County, and Adjacent Parts* (Toronto, 1899), and other pamphlets by the same author.

poor people are, although without the knowledge of Him. They took care that nothing of my little stock of clothing should be lost, and warned me to be on my guard against thieves and cheats, especially the Quieunontateronons, who often came to see me in order to get something from me; for of all the tribes of savages this one is among the smartest in the matter of deceit and theft.

My savage, who stood to me in the character of brother, recommended me to call his mother *Sendoné*, that is to say, my mother, and himself and his brothers *Ataquen*, my brother, and so the rest of his relations according to their degree of relationship, and they similarly called me their relation. The good woman said *Ayein*, my son, and the others *Ataquon*, my brother, *Earassé*, my cousin, *Hiuoittan*,<sup>1</sup> my nephew, *Houatinoron*, my uncle, *Aystan*, my father; according to their ages I was thus called uncle or nephew, etc., and by others who stood in no character of relationship *Yatoro*, my companion, my comrade, and by those who had a higher regard for me *Garihouanne*, great chief. You see that this tribe is not so sunk in rudeness and rusticity as one imagines.

The feast provided for us on our arrival was Indian corn pounded, which they call *Ottet*, with a little piece of smoked fish for each person, boiled in water, for that is the only sauce of the country, and my beans served me for the following day. After that I found the *sagamité* made in our lodge good, because it was cooked in quite a cleanly fashion; I was unable to eat it only when stinking fish was shredded into it or other small things they call *Auhaitsique*, and likewise *Leindohy*, which is corn put to rot in mud or stagnant and marshy water for three or

<sup>1</sup>In the *Histoire* these Indian words are given as *Sarassé* and *Hinoittan*.

four months, and nevertheless highly relished by them. Sometimes we used to eat wild pumpkins, boiled or else roasted under hot ashes. These I found very good, as likewise heads of Indian corn roasted before the fire, and also the grains of it stripped off and roasted like peas in the ashes. Wild blackberries the woman savage used often to bring me in the morning for my breakfast, or else stalks of *Honneha*<sup>1</sup> to suck, and anything else she could, and she used to be careful to prepare my *sagamité* first, in the cleanest wooden or birch-bark bowl; it was as broad as an alms-dish, and the spoon with which I ate was as big as a small dish or saucer. For my apartment and quarters they gave me for myself alone as much space as could be occupied by a small household; they turned one out for my sake the day after my arrival. In this particularly I noted their kind affection and that they wished to make me happy and to help me and serve me with all the attention and respect due to a great chief and war-leader, such as they deemed me. Since they are not accustomed to make use of a pillow I used at night a log of wood or a stone which I placed under my head, and apart from that lay merely on the mat like them, without coverlet or any kind of bed, and on so hard a spot that when I got up in the morning I felt all bruised and broken, head and body. In the morning after waking and a brief prayer to God I breakfasted on the trifle that our woman savage had brought me. Then taking my sun-dial I left the town to go somewhere apart in order to be able to recite my office in peace and to engage in my customary prayer and meditation. When it was about midday or one o'clock I would return

<sup>1</sup>No doubt maize. He has already said (p. 70) that his savages gave him stalks of Indian corn to suck.

to our lodge to dine on a little *sagamité* or some cooked pumpkin. After dinner I used to read some little book I had brought or else write. I carefully noted the words of the language I was learning and made lists of them which I used to study and repeat to my savages, who enjoyed it and helped me to perfect myself at it, using a very good method. They would often say to me, "*Auiel*" (instead of Gabriel which they could not pronounce because of the letter *B* which does not occur at all in their language, any more than the other labial letters), *Asséhoua*, *Agnonra*, and *Séatonqua*,<sup>1</sup> "Gabriel, take your pen and write". Then they would explain as best they could what I wanted to learn from them. And as sometimes they could not make me understand their conceptions they would explain them to me by figures, similitudes, and external demonstrations, sometimes in speech, and sometimes with a stick, tracing the object on the ground as best they could, or by a movement of the body; and they were not ashamed to make very unseemly movements in order to be able the better to make me understand by means of these comparisons, rather than by long speeches and reasonings that they might have advanced. For their language is very poor and defective in words for many things, and particularly so as concerns the mysteries of our holy religion, which we could not explain to them, not even the *Pater noster*, except by periphrases; that is to say, for one of our words we had to use several of theirs, for with them there is no knowledge of the meaning of Sanctification, the Kingdom of Heaven, the most Holy Sacrament, nor of leading into temptation.

<sup>1</sup>These three words are given in Sagard's *Dictionaire* and supply an example of how the Indians expressed new ideas, the literal meaning being "Bring snowshoes and mark it". By this bold metaphor the pen is likened to the snowshoe, which leaves its imprint on snow just as the pen does on paper.



The words Glory, Trinity, Holy Spirit, Angels, Resurrection, Paradise, Hell, Church, Faith, Hope and Charity, and a multitude of others, are not used by them. So that to make a beginning there is no necessity for very learned men, but there is indeed for persons who fear God and are patient and full of love; and it is in this that one must chiefly excel in order to convert this poor people and draw them out of their sinfulness and blindness.

I also went out very often about the town and visited them in their lodges and households. This they liked very much and were better friends with me on that account, seeing that I dealt with them in a kindly and affable spirit; otherwise they would not have regarded me with a favourable eye, and would have thought me proud and scornful, which would not have been the way to gain any influence over them, but rather to procure the disesteem of each and to make myself generally hated. For whenever a stranger has given one of them any slight reason or excuse for dissatisfaction or annoyance it is immediately known throughout the town, being passed on from one to another; and since evil is more readily believed than good they for a time judge you to be such as dissatisfaction has represented.

On this side of their territory our town was the nearest neighbour to the Iroquois, their deadly enemies; for this reason I was often warned to be on my guard for fear of some surprise while I was going to the woods to say my prayers to God or in the fields gathering wild blackberries. But I never encountered any danger or risk (God be thanked); only a Huron once strung his bow against me, thinking me an enemy, but when I spoke he was reassured and saluted me according to the custom of the country, saying *Quoye*, then he passed on his way

and I on mine. Sometimes also I visited their cemetery, which they call *Agosayé*, and admired the care that these poor people take of the dead bodies of their deceased relatives and friends, and I found that in this respect they surpass the piety of Christians, since they spare nothing for the relief of the souls [of the departed], which they believe to be immortal and in need of help from the living. If occasionally I felt some slight annoyance I used to refresh and comfort myself in God by prayer or by singing hymns and spiritual songs in praise of the Divine majesty, and these the savages would listen to with attention and pleasure, and asked me often to sing, especially after I had told them that these chants and spiritual songs were prayers that I made and addressed to our Lord God for their salvation and conversion. At night I sometimes heard the mother of my savage weeping and greatly troubled because of delusions of the devil. I questioned my savage to understand the reason of it; he replied that it was the devil who wrought in her and troubled her, by dreams and distressing representations of the death of her relatives, and other imaginary terrors. These are especially common among the women rather than the men, to whom they rarely occur, although there are occasionally some men who become demented and mad with them, according as their imagination is strong and their mind weak, causing them to believe in these diabolical dreams.

Quite a long time elapsed after my arrival before I had any knowledge or report of what place my brethren had reached; but one day Father Nicolas in company with a savage came to find me from his village, which was only five leagues from ours. I was greatly rejoiced to see him in good health and spirits in spite of the painful

toils and hungerings that he had suffered since we left the trading-place. My savages took him in very willingly to sleep in our lodge, and with what they could they made a feast for him, because he was my brother, and for the rest of the Frenchmen, because they were good friends of ours. So after having congratulated each other on our safe arrival and talked a little about what had happened to us during so long and painful a journey, we thought we would go to visit Father Joseph, who was living in another village four or five leagues off. For God had been so gracious to us that without designing it we had placed ourselves under guidance of persons who lived as near as that to one another. But since I was held in great affection by Onchiarey, my savage, and most of his relatives, I did not know how to give him notice of our intention without greatly displeasing him. At last we found means of persuading him that I had some business to communicate to our Brother Joseph, and that in going to him I must of necessity carry thither everything I had, which was his as much as mine, in order that each should take what belonged to him. Having said this I took leave of them, allowing them to expect me to return shortly. Thus I took my departure with good Father Nicolas, and we went to find Father Joseph who was living at Queunonascaran, and I cannot express to you the joy and satisfaction we felt at seeing ourselves all three together again nor did we omit to give thanks to God, praying Him to bless what we had undertaken for His glory and for the conversion of these poor unbelievers. Then we got a lodge built to house us,<sup>1</sup> in which we had

<sup>1</sup>The *Histoire* is more explicit: "The beauty of the country-side and the kindness of the great chief, with whom we lodged for several days, led us to select that district for our place of shelter." The building of their lodge came later, as indeed he says in the next paragraph.

hardly time to enjoy one another's society when I saw my savages, tired of my absence, arrive to pay us a visit. This they repeated many times, and we exerted ourselves to receive and treat them so kindly and courteously that we won them over, and they seemed to vie in courtesy in receiving Frenchmen in their lodge when the needs of business put the latter at the mercy of these savages. Our experiences with them showed that they were useful to those who had to trade with them, while we hoped by this means to make our way towards our main purpose, their conversion, the only motive for so long and distressing a journey.

Now having found ourselves among them we resolved to build a dwelling there, so as to take possession of that country in the name of Jesus Christ, that we might do the duties and exercise the ministries of our mission there. For this reason we petitioned the chief, whom they call *Garihoua Andionxra*, that is, captain and chief of police, to allow us to do so. He gave us permission after having called a council of the most notable persons and heard their opinion, and after they had endeavoured to dissuade us from our purpose, urging us rather to make our dwelling in their lodges so as to fare better. But we got what we wanted when we had made them see that that way was necessary for their good. For having come from so far away to make them understand what concerned the salvation of their souls and the blessing of eternal felicity, together with the knowledge of a true God, through the preaching of the Gospel, it was not possible to receive sufficient illumination from Heaven to instruct them amidst the bustle of the households of their lodges; and also, since we desired to preserve for them the friendship of the Frenchmen who traded with them, we should

have greater influence in maintaining it if we were thus living apart rather than lodging with them. So, having allowed themselves to be persuaded by these arguments and others like them, they told us to cause the rain to cease, which at that time was very heavy and inconvenient, by praying to that great God, whom we called Father and whose servants we said we were, to make it stop, so that they might be able to erect the lodge we desired. And God looked with favour on our prayers, after we had spent the following night in petitioning Him for His promises, and heard us and caused the rain to cease so completely that we had perfectly fine weather; whereat they were so amazed and delighted that they proclaimed it as a miracle, and we rendered thanks to God for it. And what confirmed them the more [in this belief] was that after they had spent some days on this work of piety and completely finished it the rain began again, so that they proclaimed everywhere the greatness of our God.

I cannot omit an amiable discussion which took place among them on the subject of our building. A young lad who was not working at it with goodwill complained to the others of the trouble and pains they were taking in building a lodge for people who were no relatives of theirs, and he would willingly have had them leave the work unfinished, and put us to the inconvenience of dwelling with them in their lodges or of suffering exposure to the inclemency of the open air and the discomforts of weather. But the other savages, moved by a better feeling, would by no means agree, and reproved him for his laziness and for the want of friendliness he showed to such estimable people, whom they ought to cherish like relations and friends, although actually strangers, since they had come

only with a view to the natives' own benefit and advantage.

These good savages have this praiseworthy custom among them, that when any one of their fellow-townsmen has no lodge to live in, all of them with one accord lend a hand and build one for him and do not leave him until the work has been made complete, or at least until he or they for whom it is intended can easily finish it; and to bind everyone to a task so pious and charitable the matter, when it is a question of work, is decided upon always in full council, and then the summons is cried every day throughout the town in order that each man may be on the spot at the appointed hour. This is an excellent institution, and much to be admired among savage people whom we think to be, and who in fact are, less civilized than ourselves. But as regards us, who were strangers to them and new-comers, it was a great thing that they should show themselves so full of human kindness as to put up a building for us with good feeling so general and universal, since as a rule to strangers they give nothing for nothing, except to deserving persons or those who have obliged them greatly, although they themselves always make demands, especially upon the French. They call the French *Agnonha* in their language that is, iron people. The Canadians<sup>1</sup> and Montagnais surname us *Mistigoche*,<sup>2</sup> which in their language means wooden canoe or boat; they call us so, because our ships and boats are made of wood and not bark as theirs are. But as to the name given us by the Hurons, it comes from the fact that before our arrival they did not know

<sup>1</sup>This name is applied in the *Histoire* to those tribes living below the Saguenay.

<sup>2</sup>The *Histoire* adds, "or *Ouemichti-gouchion*".

what iron was and had no use of it, nor that of any other metal or mineral.<sup>1</sup>

To return to the construction of our lodge, they erected it about the distance of two arrow-shots from the town in a place chosen by ourselves as the most convenient, on the slope of a ravine in which ran a pretty and pleasant stream, the water of which we used for drinking and for cooking our *sagamité*, except during the time that snow was deep in winter, when, on account of the difficult way down to it, we took some of the snow near us to prepare our food, and, God be thanked, we did not find ourselves at all the worse for it. It is true that one usually passes whole weeks and months without drinking, for as one never eats anything salted or spiced the daily meal, consisting of nothing but Indian corn boiled in water, serves for drink and food. We found ourselves quite well without eating salt at all; besides, we were nearly three hundred leagues distant from any salt water from which we might have hoped to obtain salt. And on my return to Canada I felt ill at first from eating it, owing to too long a disuse of it; and this makes me think that salt is not necessary for keeping a man alive, nor for health.

Our poor hut might be about twenty feet long and ten or twelve wide, in shape like a garden arbour, covered with tree-bark all over except at the top where an open crack had been left purposely to let the smoke out. So we finished it off ourselves as well as we possibly could, and with axes that we had brought we made a partition-wall of pieces of wood, dividing our hut in two.<sup>2</sup> On the

<sup>1</sup>The *Histoire* adds, "except that in some places they have copper".

<sup>2</sup>The *Histoire* describes the divisions differently, as follows: "We made, with pieces of wood, three divisions of our lodge, the first of which next the door served us as bedchamber and kitchen, for doing all the work of our little house-

door side was the place where we lived and took our rest, and the inner room served us as a chapel. In it we had put up an altar for celebrating Holy Mass, and there also we stowed away our vestments and other small articles, and for fear of the thievish hands of the savages we kept the little bark door in the partition closed and tied with a bit of cord. Around our little dwelling we made a little garden, fenced off by stakes so as to prevent free access by the small children of the savages, who for the most part seek only to do mischief. The peas, herbs, and other trifles we had sown in this little garden did quite well there, although the soil was very poor, as this is one of the worst and most unproductive parts of the country.

But because our hut had been built out of the proper season the covering consisted of very bad tree-bark that cracked and split all over, so that it was little or no shelter to us against the rain, which fell upon us everywhere, and from which we could get no protection either by day or by night, nor from the snow during the winter, sometimes finding ourselves covered with it when we rose in the morning. If the rain was heavy it put out our fire, deprived us of dinner, and caused us so much other discomfort that I may truthfully say that until we had done a little to counteract it there was not one single small corner in our hut where the rain did not come down as it did outside. This obliged us to pass whole nights without sleep, endeavouring to keep erect on our

hold and for our rest at night, which we took on the ground on a little reed mat with a block of wood for pillow and some logs that each had arranged in front of his bed so as not to be seen. This division also served us as assembly-room for receiving and conversing with our savages who came daily to visit us. The second room, the smallest, was that in which we kept our utensils and small furnishings. And the third, in which we had set up an altar with pieces of wood fixed in the ground, served us as a chapel."



feet or seated on some small spot while the storm continued. The bare ground or our knees served us for a table at which to take our meals, as with the savages, nor had we table-cloths or napkins for wiping our fingers, nor knife to cut our bread or meat; for we were debarred of bread, and meat was such a rarity for us that we have passed six weeks at a time, and even two and three whole months, without eating any, and then it was a small portion of dog, bear, or fox which they would give us for a feast, except that towards Easter and in the autumn some of the Frenchmen shared with us the game they had got hunting. The candle we used at night was nothing but little twists of birch-bark which did not last long, and the light of the fire served us to read and write by, and for other small employments, during the long winter nights, which was no slight discomfort. Our usual maintenance and food consisted of the same dishes and meats that the savages ordinarily have, except that our messes of *sagamité* were prepared with somewhat greater cleanliness, and that we also sometimes mixed small herbs with it, such as wild marjoram and other things<sup>1</sup> to give it taste and savour, in place of salt and spice. But if the savages perceived that these were in it they would not even taste it, saying that it smelt bad, and so they allowed us to eat it in peace without begging for some, as they had been accustomed to do when there was none. We used to give them a share willingly, and they did not refuse to give to us in their lodges when we asked them, and of their own accord they often offered us some. In the season when sap is rising in the trees we would sometimes make an incision into the bark of

<sup>1</sup>The *Histoire* gives these as "purslane and a certain kind of balsam, with small onions".

some big beech, and holding a bowl underneath get the juice and liquid which dropped from it; this served us as a tonic for the digestion whenever we were indisposed in that way. It is, however, a very crude remedy and of little effect, which sickens rather than strengthens, and the reason we employed it was the lack of any other substance more suitable and better. Before we set out to go to the Freshwater sea the wine for Mass, which we had carried in a little keg holding two quarts, had given out. We made more with the grapes of the country; it was very good and fermented in our little keg and in two other bottles that we had, just as it might have done in larger vessels, and if we had had other receptacles it would have been possible to make a very good supply, in view of the great quantity of vines and grapes in that country. The savages certainly eat grapes, but they neither cultivate them nor make any wine from them, not knowing the art nor having the proper utensils. Our wooden mortar and a napkin belonging to our chapel served for a press, and an *Anderoqua* or birch-bark bucket, did for a vat; but as our small vessels were not capable of containing all the must we were compelled, in order not to lose the rest, to make preserve of the grape juice, which was as good as that made in France and stood us in good stead on days of recreation and festivity during the year, when we took a little on the point of a knife.

When snow had fallen, we as well as the savages were forced to fasten rackets under our feet in order to go and fetch wood for keeping ourselves warm; these are an excellent invention, for wearing them you do not sink into the snow, and also you cover a good distance in short time. These rackets, which the Hurons c

*Agnonra*, are twice or three times as large as ours. The Montagnais, Canadians, and Algonquins, men, women, girls, and children alike, follow the trail of animals on them, and when the creature is found they bring it down by arrow-shots and swords fastened at the end of a shaft half as long as a pike, which they are skilful in wielding. Then they pitch camp and make themselves comfortable there and enjoy the fruit of their labour. But without these rackets they could not run down the moose or the deer, and consequently they would have to die of hunger in the winter season.

During the day we were continually being visited by a considerable number of the savages, with various purposes. Some came out of the friendship they bore us, and to be taught and to converse with us; others to see if they could rob us of something, which often happened, even to the extent of taking our knives, spoons, bowls of bark or wood, and other necessary articles; and others, more charitable, brought us little presents, such as Indian corn, pumpkins, beans, and sometimes small smoked fish, and as a return we also used to give them other small presents such as awls, iron arrow-heads, or a few glass beads to hang round their necks or in their ears. When they borrowed one of our kettles, being poorly provided with household articles, they would always return it with some remains of *sagamité* in it, and when they happened to hold a feast for a death many of them who were fond of us used to send us a portion, just as they did, according to custom, to the rest of their relations and friends. They also often came with invitations to feasts, but we went to them as seldom as was possible, so as not to be obliged to repay them for it, and for several other good reasons.

When any particular savage among our friends paid

us a visit, his salutation as he entered our hut was "*Ho, ho, ho,*" which is a salutation of joy, and the very sound *ho, ho,* cannot be made except as it were laughing; in this way they testified to the joy and pleasure they felt at seeing us. Their other salutation *Quoye*, which is as if one said "What is it, what do you say?", can be taken in different ways. It is commonly used to friends, and also to enemies, and they reply in the same manner *Quoye*, or, much more courteously, *Yatoro*, which means "My friend, my companion, my comrade"; or they say *Attaquen*, my brother, and to girls *Eadsé*, my kind friend, my companion, and sometimes to old men *Yaistan*, my father, *Honratinoron*, uncle, my uncle, etc.

They also used to ask us for tobacco to smoke, and most frequently in order to spare what they had in their own pouch, for they are never without it. But as the crowd was often so great that we scarcely had room in our hut we could not supply it to all, and made our excuses by saying that they themselves had traded to us the little which we had, and this reason would satisfy them.

A great invention of the devil, who plays the monkey everywhere, is this; just as with us one addresses a devout prayer to the man or woman who sneezes, so contrariwise with them, under the prompting of Satan and in the spirit of revenge, when they hear anyone sneeze their usual salutation is nothing but imprecations, abuse, and even death invoked and called down upon the Iroquois and all their enemies. We used to reprove them for this, but it had not yet entered their minds that it was wicked, since revenge is so customary and usual with them that they consider it a virtue when exercised on an enemy stranger, but not however in regard to those of their own nation, a wrong or insult from whom they know very

well how to dissimulate and endure when they must. And on this topic of revenge I must relate how the commander of the trading fleet, assisted by the other ships' captains, had with some formalities thrown a sword into the river St. Lawrence at the time of the trading in the presence of all the savages, in order to give assurance to the Canadian murderers of two Frenchmen that their fault was fully pardoned and buried in oblivion, in the same manner as that sword was lost and buried at the bottom of the water. Our Hurons, who are adepts at dissimulation and kept an unmoved countenance while this was going on, turned the whole ceremony into ridicule and made a mock of it when in their own country again, saying that all the Frenchmen's anger had been drowned with this sword, and that henceforth for killing a Frenchman one would get off at the cost of a dozen beaver-skins.

During the winter, when the Epicerinys encamped in the country of the Hurons, three leagues distant from us, they often used to come and pay us a visit in our hut, to see us and to talk with us; for, as I have said in another place, they are excellent people and are acquainted with both languages, the Huron and their own, which the Hurons are not; the latter neither know nor learn any other language than their own, whether from indifference or because they have less need of their neighbours than their neighbours have of them. The Epicerinys talked to us several times about a certain nation to whom they go once every year for trading, distant from them only about a moon and a half, which is a month's or six weeks' journey both by land and by lake and river. To the same nation also come for trade a certain people who reach the place by sea, in great wooden boats or ships

laden with different kinds of merchandise, such as axes shaped like the tail of a partridge, leggings with shoes attached but as flexible as a glove, and many other things, which they exchange for furs. They told us also that these persons have no hair, neither beard nor hair on the head (and therefore nicknamed by us "bald-pates"), and they assured us that these people had said that from the description of us given them they would be glad to see us.<sup>1</sup> This made us conjecture that they might be some civilized race and nation living in the direction of the Chinese sea, which bounds this country on the west just as it is bounded by the ocean about 40 degrees eastward; and we were hoping to make the journey thither at the first opportunity along with these Epicerinys, of which in return for a small present they gave us some promise, if duty had not recalled me to France too soon. For although these Epicerinys are not willing to take lay Frenchmen on their journey, any more than the Montagnais and Hurons are willing to take them to the Saguenay, for fear of revealing the rich and most profitable source of their trading and the country to which they go to collect most of their furs, they are not so secretive in regard to us, knowing already by experience that we do not take part in any traffic except that of souls, which we endeavour to win for Jesus Christ.

Whenever we went to see and visit our savages in their lodges they were as a rule quite pleased, deeming it an honour and a favour, and complaining that they did not see us there often enough. Sometimes they behaved like the mercers and merchants of the Palais [Royal] at Paris inviting us to their own firesides, perhaps in the hope of getting an awl or a little string of beads, with which th

<sup>1</sup>This may relate to the English on Hudson bay.

are very fond of adorning themselves. They would also make room for us on the mat beside them in the best place. Then they offered us some of their *sagamité* to eat, as they often have some remains of it in the pot; but for my part I very rarely took it, both because it usually smelt too strong of stinking fish and also because the dogs frequently put their nose into it and children their leavings. It was also very disgusting and offensive to us to see the women savages eating the lice from their own bodies and from those of their children; for they devour them as if it was something very good and tasty. Then, just as over here we drink one after another, presenting the glass to him whose health we have drunk, so the savages, who have only water for their sole drink, when they wish to entertain someone and demonstrate their friendship for him, present him with the lighted pipe after smoking themselves; and considering us as friends and relatives they would offer and hand it to us with very fine courtesy. But as I had never wished to become habituated to tobacco I used to thank them but not take it, at which they were at first all astonished, because there is nobody in all those countries who does not take it and use it in order to warm the stomach in default of wine and spices, so as to break up in some measure so much indigestible matter that comes from their bad food.

Whenever we had to go from one village to another for some necessity or business we used to go freely to their dwellings to lodge and get our food, and they received us in them and treated us very kindly although they were under no obligation to us. For they hold it proper to help wayfarers and to receive among them with politeness anyone who is not an enemy, and much more so those of their own nation. They reciprocate hos-

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pitality and give such assistance to one another that the necessities of all are provided for without there being any indigent beggar in their towns and villages; and they considered it a very bad thing when they heard it said that there were in France a great many of these needy beggars, and thought that this was for lack of charity in us, and blamed us for it severely.