

1646.

Animals  
and dia-  
monds.

Besides rattlesnakes, which are found among the Iroquois, as in all the more southerly provinces of North America, there is a black-snake, which runs up trees, and is not venomous. This reptile has a mortal enemy, unworthy apparently of him, but nevertheless waging a cruel war upon him. It is a little bird, which pounces upon him as soon as it perceives him, and with one blow of its beak lays him dead.<sup>1</sup> The asps of these cantons are much longer than ours. Tigers are found there, of a light gray, not striped. They have a very long tail, and pursue the porcupines.<sup>2</sup> The Iroquois kill them on the trees more frequently than on the ground. They are good eating, even in the opinion of the French, who esteem the flesh as equal to mutton. All have a very fine hair, in some cases reddish in color, and their skins are very good fur.

But the finest peltry of this country is the skin of the black-squirrel.<sup>3</sup> This animal is as large as a three months' kitten, very lively, gentle, and easily tamed. Of this skin the Iroquois make robes, for which they command seven or eight dollars apiece. The pigeons are there, as elsewhere, birds of passage. A missionary observed, in an Iroquois canton, that every morning, from six o'clock till eleven, the air above a gorge in the river, about a quarter of a league wide, was seen to be completely darkened by the number of these birds; that afterwards they all descended to bathe in a large pond near by, and then disappeared. He adds, that only the males are then seen, but that the females come in the afternoon to go through the same manœuvre. Finally, there are in the Iroquois country stones containing diamonds, some all ready cut, and sometimes valuable.<sup>4</sup>

I now return to the new acts of hostility, which soon

<sup>1</sup> The kingbird (*tyrannus intrepidus*), of which such stories are still told: N. Y. Nat. Hist., Zoology, i., p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> The American panther (*felis con-*

*color*): N. Y. Nat. Hist., Zoology, i., p. 47.

<sup>3</sup> Black-squirrel (*sciurus niger*): N. Y. Nat. Hist., Zoology, i., p. 60.

<sup>4</sup> Charlevoix, Journal, p. 171