

1696.

into the water, take the cannon ashore and drag all the batteaux on rollers above the fall, and this operation, which lasted till ten o'clock at night, was effected with wonderful order by the light of bark torches. This rapid passed, they began to advance with greater precaution, not only because they were approaching the enemy, but because the road for those who had landed was wretched; the Chevalier de Vaudreuil having marched with all his men for five leagues knee deep in water.¹

At last the army entered Lake Gannentaha² by a place called le Rigolet, which it would not have been easy to force had the enemy taken the precaution to occupy it. Two bundles of rushes were found hanging to a tree, which according to Indian custom showed that fourteen hundred and thirty-four warriors, for there were that many rushes in the two bundles, were waiting to receive the French, and thus defied them. The army then crossed the Lake in battle array, Mr. de Callieres, who commanded on the left, made a demonstration of landing on that side where the enemy were, and at the same time the Chevalier de Vaudreuil made a descent on the right with seven or eight hundred men; then, turning around the lake, proceeded to join Mr. de Callieres, after which all the rest of the army debarked.

It arrives at Onondaga.

Mr. le Vasseur at once traced a fort, which was completed the next day. In this were enclosed the store of provisions, the canoes, batteaux, and its guard was confided to the Marquis de Crisasy and Mr. des Bergeres, both captains, to whom were assigned one hundred and fifty picked men. As the preparations for this expedition were not cloaked by any pretext, I do not see how they could have expected to surprise the Iroquois. It is true, indeed, that the public uncertainty as to the spot where the storm would break, long kept the cantons in suspense; but a miserable deserter from the village at the Mountain, who

The Onondagas notified by a deserter.

¹ Beyond the Oneida river: N. Y. ² Onondaga lake; the Rigolet is the outlet. See ante, vol. ii., p. 189, iii., p. 275. 257.