

together that they turn the edge of a knife or the point of a spear. The head is large, and protected by an exceedingly hard skull, like a helmet. Hence the name of "armored fish" has been given it by the French. It carries on perpetual war with, and feeds upon, other fishes. For a weapon it carries an immense beak, of the length of a man's arm and furnished with a double row of teeth. With this hunting-spear it not only devours other fishes, but also, whenever it wishes to vary its diet, deceives and ensnares birds. For this latter purpose it hides itself among the sedge; it projects its beak from the water and opens it slightly. It thus remains motionless until the birds approach and thoughtlessly perch upon the beak, deeming it a reed or a bush; then the treacherous ensnarer seizes the feet of the unfortunate birds by closing its beak, and, dragging them into the water, devours them.⁶⁸

The birds are fully as abundant as the fishes. During certain months of the year the pigeons sally forth from the woods into the open country in such great numbers that they overload the branches of the trees. When they have settled upon the trees at night they are easily captured, and the savages heap their tables with royal abundance. Besides this, in the huge gulf into which the river saint Lawrence flows may be seen a small island, or rather a double rock; they call it the isle of birds.⁶⁹ For so many congregate there from the neighboring ocean that it is impossible to count their numbers. The natives make an easy prey of them with clubs, or by trampling them under foot, and bring back their canoes filled with sumptuous food acquired without price. [345] Everywhere may be seen, sporting in the water, geese, ducks, herons, cranes, swans, coots and other