

All the people passed the night on the spot; they lighted many fires, and slung their kettles. We withdrew for the night to the old Village, with the resolve to return the next morning, at daybreak, when they were to throw the bones into the pit; but we could hardly arrive in time, although we made great haste, on account of an accident that happened. One of the souls, which was not securely tied, or was perhaps too heavy for the cord that fastened it, fell of itself into the pit; the noise awakened the Company, who immediately ran and mounted in a crowd upon the scaffold, and emptied indiscriminately each package into the pit, keeping, however, the robes in which they were enveloped. We had only set out from the Village at that time, but the noise was so great that it seemed almost as if we were there. As we drew near, we saw nothing less than a picture of Hell. The large space was quite full of fires and flames, and the air resounded in all directions with the confused voices of these Barbarians; the noise ceased, however, [210] for some time, and they began to sing,—but in voices so sorrowful and lugubrious that it represented to us the horrible sadness and the abyss of despair into which these unhappy souls are forever plunged.

Nearly all the souls were thrown in when we arrived, for it was done almost in the turning of a hand; each one had made haste, thinking there would not be room enough for all the souls; we saw, however, enough of it to judge of the rest. There were five or six in the pit, arranging the bones with poles. The pit was full, within about two feet; they turned back over the bones the robes which bordered the edge of the pit, and covered the remaining space