

it is almost equally distant from the other posts that have been established, and is in the midst of all the nations having relations with us.

I know not why the name "lakes" should have been given to abysses of water of so great and vast extent. Thus the first lake is called Lake Superior, the second Lake Huron, the third Lake Michigan or Illinois, the fourth Lake Erie, the fifth Lake Ontario. I think it is important and even necessary for the satisfaction of the curious to explain the reasons that may have led to the division of this single lake into five parts. I say one and a single lake, because it is incontestable that the waters are the same, communicating with and joining one another.

It is nevertheless true that there is a rapid at the village of the Santeurs of Ste. Marie, so that navigation by barks or ships is impracticable, either ascending or descending. Consequently, a portage must be made—that is to say, goods must be carried by land around the rapids; they can, nevertheless, be run in a canoe or shallop. This is the chief reason why lake Superior, whose circumference is 500 leagues, has been separated from lake Huron, whose circumference is 600. Now the latter is not separated from lake Michigan, but it is claimed that it is not the same, on account of a strait two leagues in width, through which barks and ships can pass without danger. Once this strait is passed, the lake widens suddenly; and its circumference may be 300 leagues.

Lake Erié is also separated from lake Huron by a strait, through which ships can easily pass. It is 200 leagues in circumference. The latter lake is separated from the first one, lake Ontario, which is also 200 leagues in circumference, by an insurmountable waterfall, which nothing can pass. Accordingly, there is nothing more easy to conceive than that one can in a ship coast along 1,800 leagues of country in the interior, without difficulty, and on fresh water, not only in canoes, but also in barks and large ships—with this exception, that vessels on lakes Huron and Michigan and on lake Erié cannot pass into lake Superior or lake Ontario, on which barks or ships would have to be built.

At a distance from the shores of these lakes, the bottom cannot be found any more than on the high seas; and close to land