

renew their tears and feel afresh the grief they had on the day of the funeral. I was present at the spectacle, and willingly invited to it all our servants; for I do not think one could see in the world a more vivid picture or more perfect representation of what man is. It is true that in France our Cemeteries preach powerfully, and that all those bones piled up one upon another without discrimination,—those of the poor [197] with those of the rich, those of the mean with those of the great,—are so many voices continually proclaiming to us the thought of death, the vanity of the things of this world, and contempt for the present life: but it seems to me that what our Savages do on this occasion touches us still more, and makes us see more closely and apprehend more sensibly our wretched state. For, after having opened the graves, they display before you all these Corpses, on the spot, and they leave them thus exposed long enough for the spectators to learn at their leisure, and once for all, what they will be some day. The flesh of some is quite gone, and there is only parchment on their bones; in other cases, the bodies look as if they had been dried and smoked, and show scarcely any signs of putrefaction; and in still other cases they are still swarming with worms. When the friends have gazed upon the bodies to their satisfaction, they cover them with handsome Beaver robes quite new: finally, after some time they strip them of their flesh, taking off skin and flesh which they throw into the fire along with the robes and mats in which the bodies were wrapped. As regards the bodies of those [198] recently dead, they leave these in the state in which they are, and content themselves by simply covering them with new robes.