

country. Nearly every day, unfortunate women were killed [141] in their fields. The villages were in a state of continual alarm, and all the troops that were raised in good numbers to pursue the enemy over the frontiers were defeated and routed; captives were taken by hundreds, and frequently we had no other couriers and bearers of these dismal tidings but poor unfortunates who had escaped from the midst of the flames, whose half-burnt bodies and mutilated fingers convinced us, more than their words, of the misfortune that had fallen on them and on their comrades.

This scourge of Heaven was all the more felt as it was accompanied by that of famine, which is universal among all these Tribes for over a hundred leagues around. Indian corn, which is the sole staff of life here, was so scarce that those who had the most had hardly enough for sowing their fields. Many lived only on a kind of acorn, on pumpkins, and on paltry roots which they often went to seek very far away, in places where they were exposed to massacre and which were [142] covered only with the enemies' tracks.

We have derived this benefit from the public necessity, that God, by a special providence, had furnished us with a sufficient supply of the corn of the country; and this gave us, at the same time, a fine opportunity of showing our Christians by very perceptible effects the close union that we contract with them through the spirit of Faith. Our house, in which we have a sort of hospital outside of our apartments, has always been open to them. They have come there from time to time, and one after another, to recruit their strength, so that they might afterward more easily work in their fields. The Infidels were