

Savage Christians, who had both gone on ahead, are astonished, looking back, to see them plunged into those masses of ice; they fear to perish themselves, more than they have hope of [104] being able to give them help, since that place was inaccessible. They throw some ropes to them, from as great a distance as they can; but, at each effort which they make to withdraw them from the wreck, they see them fall back more heavily into new ruins of that icy sea. Finally, Our Lord assisted them, when they had almost lost all hope, and they found a piece of ice fairly firm, which received them safely. From this, afterward, soaked with water clean through, and half-dead with cold, they nevertheless found means of dragging themselves from ice to ice, from danger to danger, to a place of safety.

All of them were obliged to owe their lives to the most Blessed Virgin. Three days afterward, that young Frenchman who had so charitably succored them went astray in the woods, having lost his trail and the roads, which the newly-fallen snow had entirely covered. The coming night augments his misfortune; to stop, would have been to chill him with cold; the more he advances, the more he goes astray, no longer knowing where he [105] is walking. He is wandering the whole night, and even until two o'clock in the afternoon of the next day,—the day of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin. Finally, exhausted with cold, hunger, and weariness, he stops, resolute to face death. But, in order to die in the sentiments of devotion which were then further possessing his heart, he had recourse to that Mother of mercy, reciting to her, *Sub tuum præsidium confugimus sancta Dei genitrix*. At the same time he