

snow; or to repair to certain fishing-grounds in places more open to the Southern Sun, where the ice melted sooner. They hoped to find, in those remote places, some little alleviation from the famine, which was rendering their existence a living death,—as it were, an enemy domiciliated, shut up in their own houses, who had made himself master of the situation,—and all this, while in dread of a death still more cruel, and of falling into the fire and flame of the Iroquois, who were continually seeking their lives. Before going away, they confessed, redoubling their devotions in proportion as their miseries increased. Many received holy communion as preparation for death. Never was their faith more lively, and never did the hope of Paradise appear to them more sweet than in this despair, this surrender of their lives. They split up into bands, so [82] that, if some fell into the hands of the enemy, others might escape.

The great Lake which surrounded our Island of Saint Joseph was, at that time, nothing but a bed of ice two or three feet in thickness. Hardly had these good Christians left our sight than the ice melted under their feet; some were drowned in the depths, and found there their grave; others, more fortunate, extricated themselves, though benumbed with a deadly cold. It was a most cruel death to the poor old men, women, and children, to give up their souls on these snows, without help or succor,—not, however, without consolation from him whom they adored in their hearts, and who could never die therein.

An old Christian woman, aged sixty years, who had passed the whole night lying on the ice, was found on the following morning, full of life. She was asked who had preserved her. “I called out,”