

which aided rather in postponing for a little time their death, than in satisfying the needs of life. Winter having set in, covering the ground with three or four feet of snow, and freezing all the Lakes and Rivers, that entire multitude of people who had crowded near us found themselves in immediate need, and in the extremity of misery, not having laid in, nor being able to store, any provisions.

Then it was that we were compelled to behold dying skeletons eking out a miserable life, feeding even on the excrements and refuse of nature. The acorn was to them, for the most part, what the choicest viands are in France. Even carrion dug up, the remains of Foxes and Dogs, excited no horror; and they even devoured one another, but this in secret; for although the Hurons, ere the faith had given them more light than they possessed in infidelity, would not have considered that they committed any sin in eating their enemies, any more than in killing them, [12] yet I can truly say that they regard with no less horror the eating of their fellow-countrymen than would be felt in France at eating human flesh. But necessity had no longer law; and famished teeth ceased to discern the nature of that they ate. Mothers fed upon their children; brothers on their brothers; while children recognized no longer, in a corpse, him whom, while he lived, they had called their Father.

We endeavored to relieve these miseries, in part; but, although our alms exceeded, perhaps, what Prudence asked of us, still—the calamity being so widespread, and it being impossible for us to assist all equally—we were compelled to be witnesses of some of these horrifying spectacles.