

ten, before our house, a mountain: the wind drifting it, and we, on the other hand, shovelling it away to make a little path before our door. It rose like a wall, all white, higher [46] by one or two feet than the roof of our house. The cold was at times so violent that we heard the trees split in the woods, and in breaking make a noise like that of firearms. It happened to me that while writing very near a big fire, my ink froze; and I had to place a little pan full of hot coals near my inkstand, otherwise I should have found black ice instead of ink.

This extreme cold lasted only ten days or thereabout, not continuously, but at different times. The rest of the time, although the cold greatly exceeds that of France, it is not at all intolerable; and I can say that it is easier to work here in the woods than it is in France, where the winter rains are so penetrating. But one must be provided with good mittens, [47] unless he wants to have his hands frozen; and yet our Savages visited us sometimes half-naked, without complaining of the cold. This teaches me that, if nature can accustom itself to this cold, nature and grace can very well give us the heart and strength to support it cheerfully. If there is cold, there is wood.

I have said that the winter has been long; from the 27th of November up to the end of April, the ground was all the time white with snow; and from the 29th of the same month of November up to the 23rd of April, our little river was frozen, but in such a way that a hundred wagons could have passed over it without shaking it. The ice is of such thickness that, when they were breaking it near Kebec, to launch a bark, sieur du Plessis told me that, being