

The heat here is intense and burning, and yet I have observed since I have been here that there has been frost every month of the year. I am not surprised at these frosts. We have on the North of us a chain of mountains, probably one or two hundred leagues in extent. We are not distant six leagues from these [106] stupendous mountains, probably always covered with snow.⁴² I leave you to decide whether the wind coming from that direction can bring much heat. Besides, we are in a forest covering from 800 to a thousand leagues. We live upon the banks of two rivers, one of which would swallow up the four great rivers of France without overflowing. Behold herein the real cause and source of the cold. If the country were cleared as far as the mountains, we should probably have one of the most fruitful valleys in the universe. Experience teaches us that the woods engender cold and frosts. The lands owned by the family living here, having been cleared more than ours, are sooner freed from snow, and less subject to cold in the morning. Neither do we feel these rigors so often as do those who live in the [107] house of the Reverend Recolet Fathers, who are farther in the woods.

There are many days in the winter when the heat of the Sun makes itself felt a great deal more than it does in France. The first day that I saw our river frozen, I was astonished, because it was very mild weather; and, in seeking a reason for it, this came to my mind. A river always freezes first along its banks; and, when the tide rises, it loosens this ice and carries it higher up. Now, not far from us there is a waterfall or some rocks, which prevent the tidal ice from passing beyond them. This ice being