

thus massed and pressed together in the river, which is in the midst of so great a wood that the snow and cold are easily preserved, it becomes consolidated; and thousands and thousands of blocks of ice are frozen into one mass which goes on increasing every day, [108] making a great bridge over the whole river. Lombardy is not far from the Alps, the summits of which are always white with snow, and yet I do not know that Europe has a more agreeable and more fertile valley than that country. I would say the same of the place in which we live, if it were cleared and cultivated. This is my opinion touching this country; if I am mistaken, it is not strange, as that happens to me often; everything depends upon clearing the land. But oh, my God! What labor there will be in clearing a forest encumbered with fallen trees, I might well say, since the deluge.

On the 23rd of the same month of April we saw the ice float away; it is a frightful spectacle. I was told that pieces half a league long were seen passing before the fort. These are the banks of frozen water which the current of the great river goes on loosening. Upon our [109] little river the ice is not so alarming; nevertheless I have seen it carry away large pieces of earth, tear up stumps, and crush the trees which it had enclosed. You can see them [the trees] moving erect on these pieces of ice, in the very middle of the river, which in a single tide appears as beautiful and as clear as if it had never been frozen.

On the 7th of May a Savage called to see la Nasse, our neighbor; as I saw that he was not well, I addressed him, speaking to him of God and exhorting him to have recourse to him. He answered me: