

may have more leisure to examine their consciences and prepare their souls for the sacrament. This also gives the priest greater facility for hearing each one of them—which is done less conveniently and usefully when they flock in crowds to the sacred tribunal of penance. The remainder of December and the month of January [—until the day sacred to the Mother of God purified in the temple—] they spend partly in fishing, partly in the easier hunting of partridges, hares, and other game of that kind, during which time they seldom spend the night out-of-doors. If bitter cold or rain keep them indoors they then busy themselves in netting their raquettes, which they use in fearlessly treading the snow when pursuing the larger animals, through the forest, or over plains covered with deep snow. When they have recognized the footprints or the haunts of those creatures, they migrate thither with their whole families; and they do not revisit their village and their homes before the vernal breath of the zephyrs has begun to melt the snow. Having returned to this village and being restored by the Paschal food, they sow their fields with Indian corn; then they resort to the Rivers' banks in quest of fish, or strip the aged trees in the forest, with whose bark they build their light canoes. After framing their vessels, they gather, toward the end of August, quantities of a plant useful in pharmacy and of no mean value in Europe, which druggists call "Capillaire."³¹ Meanwhile the Indian corn ripens, and is cut toward the 13th of September. After this follows the Beaver hunt, which, as I have just said, continues to the 1st of November. In these occupations their piety shines forth, as well as their extreme docility in