

St. Lawrence. The blubber of one of these yields a barrellful of oil; but here, as a rule, 3 or 4, and sometimes 6 or 7, are required to fill one.

You no doubt imagine the horrible appearance of those who render these *oils* [fats] amid the grease and the dense clouds of suffocating smoke. In nearly every instance the women prepare, with as much skill as patience, and cut into small pieces, the blubber, which their husbands afterward try out in the kettles placed on furnaces; for the montagnais alone—very different from the other nations, who look upon their women as slaves—imitate in their households the french and more rational custom of mutually helping one another. To such an extent is this done that the man always reserves the more arduous task for himself, and leaves the less fatiguing to his wife and children, and even, in times of scarcity, deprives himself of what he needs—with this distinction, however, that he is always helped, and eats first. In truth, although the Montagnais women, as compared with the women of other Savage nations, may be looked upon as queens and sovereigns, they have true deference for their husbands; and consequently the latter seldom gainsay them. The choice of plans, of undertakings, of journeys, of winterings, lies in nearly every instance in the hands of the housewife.

I know not whether we should most admire the fatigues endured by these worthy people, the danger they run on the river, or their invincible courage. Cold, storms, snow, ice—nothing prevented them from exposing themselves so far out that, in most instances, they lost sight of land; they were fortunate if they escaped when any of those snow-storms arose