

ing, continue on their way without dining, and go to bed without supping. Each one arranges his own baggage, as best he can; and the women strike the cabin, to remove the ice and snow from the bark, which they roll up in a bundle. The baggage being packed, they throw it upon their backs or loins in long bundles, which they hold with a cord that passes over their foreheads, beneath which they place a piece of bark so that it will not hurt them. When every one is loaded, they mount their snowshoes, which are bound to the feet so that they will not sink into the snow; and then they march over plain and mountain, making the little ones go on ahead, who start early, and often do not arrive until quite late. These little ones have their load, or their sledge, to accustom them early to fatigue; and they try to stimulate them to see who will carry or drag the most. To paint to you the hardships of the way, I have neither pen nor brush that could do it; they must be experienced in order to be appreciated, and [245] this dish must be tried to know how it tastes. We did nothing but go up and go down; frequently we had to bend halfway over, to pass under partly-fallen trees, and step over others lying upon the ground whose branches sometimes knocked us over, gently enough to be sure, but always coldly, for we fell upon the snow. If it happened to thaw, Oh God, what suffering! It seemed to me I was walking over a road of glass, which broke under my feet at every step. The frozen snow, beginning to melt, would fall and break into blocks or big pieces, into which we often sank up to our knees, and sometimes to our waists. If there was pain in falling, there was still more in pulling ourselves out, for our raquettes were loaded with