

my cloak, to show that I intended to return, if I found the right way, making him a sign that he should wait, for we did not understand each other. So I threw my cloak upon the snow, and retraced my steps, crying out from time to time to make myself heard by our people, in case the right road was not far away from me. I shout and halloo in these great forests, but no one answers; the silence is profound, for even the trees do not rustle, as there is no wind. The cold was so severe that I was sure I would die during the night, if I had to pass it upon the snow, having neither axe nor tinder with which to make a fire. I go, I come, I turn on all sides; but I find nothing which does not confuse me still more. The last thing that a man abandons is hope; I continued to hold on to it by the little end, imagining every moment that I was going to find my way; but at last, after [268] many windings, seeing that human beings could give me no help, I stopped in order to offer my little prayers to the Creator, with whom I saw these great woods all filled as well as the rest of the world. The thought came into my mind that I was not lost, since God knew where I was; and, turning over this truth in my mind, I slowly approached the river I had crossed on leaving the cabin. I cried out, I called again, but everybody was already far away. I was beginning to loosen my hold upon the little thread of hope that I had held up to that time, when I perceived some snowshoe tracks behind the brushwood. I betook myself thither, *et vidi vestigia virorum, et mulierum et infantium*. In a word, I found what I had so long been seeking. At first I was not sure this was a