

because I ate so little, saying that I would starve myself before the famine overtook us. Meanwhile our Savages had feasts every day, so that in a very short time we found ourselves without bread, without flour, without eels, and without any means of helping ourselves. For besides being very far in the woods, where we would have died a thousand times before [195] reaching the French settlement, we were wintering on the other side of the great river, which cannot be crossed in this season on account of the great masses of ice which are continually floating about, and which would crush not only a small boat but even a great ship. As to the chase, the snows not being deep in comparison with those of other years, they could not take the Elk, and so brought back only some Beavers and Porcupines, but in so small a number and so seldom that they kept us from dying rather than helped us to live. My host said to me during this time of scarcity, "*Chibiné*, harden thy soul, resist hunger; thou wilt be sometimes two, sometimes three or four, days without food; do not let thyself be cast down, take courage; when the snow comes, we shall eat." It was not our Lord's will that they should be so long without capturing anything; but we usually had something to eat once in two days,—indeed, we very often had a Beaver in the morning, and in the evening of the next day a Porcupine as big as [196] a sucking Pig. This was not much for nineteen of us, it is true, but this little sufficed to keep us alive. When I could have, toward the end of our supply of food, the skin of an Eel for my day's fare, I considered that I had breakfasted, dined, and supped well.

