

At first, I had used one of these skins to patch the cloth gown that I wore, as I forgot to bring some pieces with me; but, when I was so sorely pressed with hunger, I ate my pieces; and, if my gown had been made of the same stuff, I assure you I would have brought it back home much shorter than it was. Indeed, I ate old Moose skins, which are much tougher than those of the Eel; I went about through the woods biting the ends of the branches, and gnawing the more tender bark, as I shall relate in the journal. Our neighboring Savages suffered still more than we did, some of them coming to see us, and telling us that their comrades had died of hunger. I saw some who had eaten only once in five days, and who considered themselves very well off if they found something [197] to dine upon at the end of two days; they were reduced to skeletons, being little more than skin and bones. We occasionally had some good meals; but for every good dinner we went three times without supper. When a young Savage of our cabin was dying of hunger, as I shall relate in the following Chapter, they often asked me if I was not afraid, if I had no fear of death; and seeing me quite firm, they were astonished, on one occasion in particular, when I saw them almost falling into a state of despair. When they reach this point, they play, so to speak, at "save himself who can;" throwing away their bark and baggage, deserting each other, and abandoning all interest in the common welfare, each one strives to find something for himself. Then the children, women, and for that matter all those who cannot hunt, die of cold and hunger. If they had reached this extremity, I would have been among the first to die.

