

reason to fear the ice, which from the end of November is sometimes found in abundance upon the Mississippi, upon which they were to embark. These pieces of ice, if they happened to crowd together, could soon crush the boat that became surrounded by them; at least they could stop it, and reduce the travelers to a great scarcity of provisions. Finally the day set for the embarkation came; it was the 24th of November. The baggage of the Jesuits did not greatly embarrass the vessel in which they had taken passage; they had only their beds and their clothes in small quantities, with some provisions which they had saved for the voyage; this food served not only for them, but for forty-eight negroes embarked with them. These slaves, who keenly felt the scarcity prevalent throughout the colony, no longer belonged to the Jesuits, having been confiscated for the benefit of the King. But their former masters always preserved the same care in regard to them, and shared quite willingly with these wretches the provisions which they had saved. This charity was then very necessary; the supply of food that had been shipped by the order of the King was very moderate; it had been given as if for a journey of fifteen or twenty days, but, at that season, the journey ought, from the experience of many years, to have been estimated as lasting forty or forty-five days. Fortunately, Monsieur de Volsey,⁴⁷ officer of the troops, himself provided for what was lacking; he was in another boat with about twenty Englishmen, whom the savages, who had revolted against them, had captured some months before, and whom they had taken to the Illinois country in order to deliver them to the French. The commandant