

maple, and *plaine*, and of the poplar, a tree which grows so large that some specimens of it are five brasses in circumference.¹ As for the trees called "maple" and *plaine*, incisions are made in them early in March, and a tube is placed in each incision to catch the sap; this passes through the tube and falls into a vessel, which is placed underneath to receive it. These trees flow abundantly during three months, from the first of March to the end of May; the water which they distill is very sweet; to preserve it, this is boiled until it becomes a sirup, and if it is boiled longer it turns to sugar.

The cold weather is even more severe in those countries than it is in Canada. During the winter that we spent in our fort, we heard the loud noise, like the sound of a gunshot, made by the trees when they were split by the intense cold. Where the water in the river was still, it was frozen solid; and on the land the snow fell to the depth of five feet. All this snow and ice melts usually at the beginning of April, which causes the Mississippi to overflow its banks in the spring.

As soon as winter begins in that country,—that is, in the month of September,—the bears climb up hollow trees, and wedge their bodies into the hollow places of the trees; they remain there six or seven months, without leaving their refuge, and nourish themselves only by licking their paws. When they enter those holes, they are very poor in flesh; but when they leave them, after winter has ended, they are so fat that they have a layer of tallow half a foot thick. It is almost always in the poplar or cypress that the bear hides, because those trees are usually hollow. When men undertake to kill them, they place against the tree in which the bear is, another tree, which extends to the hole by which the bear entered. A man ascends by this latter tree, and through the hole flings into the hollow of the tree where the bear lies some pieces of burning dry wood, which compels the animal to come out, in order to escape being burned there. When it has emerged from the hollow of the

¹ Probably the cottonwood (*Populus*), which often grows to an enormous size. The *plaine* (a term used to this day in Canada) is the red or swamp maple (*Acer rubrum*), which also produces sugar, although somewhat inferior to that of the sugar maple (*A. saccharinum*).—Ed.