

besieged in a constant state of anxiety, and weary them out with toil and watching.

The Frenchmen, in the meantime, suffered terribly from hunger and thirst, cold and want of sleep. The only food they had was hominy—poor fare for men constantly at work. In their hasty rush from the shore at the approach of the canoes down the Sault, they had failed to bring any of their large kettles, or any supply of water, and as there was none to be had about the fort, the thirst of the whole party soon became almost unbearable. Besides it was quite impossible to eat the dry food alone without being almost choked in the effort.

In despair some of the bravest determined to dare the fire of the Iroquois, in order to bring water from the river. Collecting all their small vessels, they boldly sallied forth, under cover of the fire of their comrade's muskets, and without loss of life succeeded in their task. This supply, however, was soon exhausted; and the Iroquois, who had not anticipated this rush to the river, had now posted their men in such a position that it was impossible to repeat the attempt. Unable to bear the thirst, they went eagerly to work, and dug vigorously until their hearts were gladdened by the sight of a little muddy water welling up through the soil.

They had another great misfortune to bear in the desertion of all the Huron allies excepting Etienne. Among the Iroquois were many adopted Hurons, who eagerly besought their kinsmen with Daulac to desert, and the poor Hurons, starved and suffering, knowing that sooner or later they must perish if they remained in the fort, listened to the voice of the tempters, and at every fitting opportunity leaped over the palisades and fled to the Iroquois, who received them with shouts of joy. At last Annahotaha and the Algonquins alone remained with the French. This desertion greatly weakened the hopes of the little party, now reduced from sixty to twenty. Yet when they were again asked to surrender, they boldly refused, nothing daunted, and firm in their intention of holding out to the death.

In a few days the five hundred warriors from the Richelieu joined the besiegers, and the Iroquois now thought that the only thing to be considered was how to win the victory with the least loss of life. Calling a council, they decided to advance cautiously