

so that if we made ourselves safe from the savages we also made every other living thing safe from us. To fish was well nigh our only resource, but although many of our men labored diligently at it they met with but indifferent returns. Thus it was that our most ardent hopes, our very life itself hung upon the coming of the promised supplies. There was joy at the fort when at length the sail of the little bark was seen, Sieur de Troyes who had grown exceedingly grave and melancholy took on again something of his wonted spirit. But we were not quite yet to be succored for it was the season of the most light and trifling airs, so that the bark for two days hung idly on the shining lake some leagues away from the mouth of the river while we idled and fretted like children impatient for her coming. When once we had her within the bar there was no time lost in unloading. It was a poor soldier indeed who could not work to secure the comfort of his own belly, and the store was so ample that we felt secure for the winter come what might. The bark that fetched these things had been so delayed by the calms that she weighed and sailed with the first favoring breeze, and it was not until her sail had fallen below the horizon that we faintly had sight or smell of what she had brought.

From the first the stores proved bad, still we made shift to use the best eked out with what the near by forest and river afforded. For many weeks we saw no foes. There was little work to do and the men idled through the days with no word on their lips but to complain of the food and wish for spring. When the frosts began to fall we had a more vigorous spell of it, but now for the first time appeared the Iroquois wasps. One of our parties which had gone toward the great fall of the Niagara lost two men, those who returned reported that their comrades were taken all unawares by the savages. Another party seeking game to the eastward where a stream cuts through the high bank on its way to the lake never came back at all. Here we found their bodies and buried them; but their scalps after the manner of these people had been taken.

Christmas drew on, but never was a sorrier season kept by soldiers of France. De Troyes had fallen ill. Naught ailed him that we could see save low spirits and a thinning of the blood which made him too weak to walk. The Father Jean de Lamberville who had stayed with us and who would have been our hope and consolation in those days, very early fell desperate ill of a distemper so that the men had not the help of his ministrations and holy example. Others there were who either from febleness or lack of discipline openly refused their daily duty and went unpunished.