

I am glad that the beginning of my shipwreck excites in your soul, the sentiments which I said it should ; it is a proof that I have not exaggerated the evils which I suffered, and saw others suffer. Yet, after all, my dear brother, that is only a slight sketch, and what I have yet to tell far surpasses all I have hitherto said, and deserves all your attention.

While we were refitting the longboat, we ate only once in twenty-four hours, and then our allowance was smaller than that I have already mentioned. It was prudent to act so ; we had only two months' stores in the ship, this being the usual provision made on sailing from Quebec to France ; all our biscuit was lost, and more than half our meat had been consumed or spoilt, during the eleven days we had been at sea ; so that, with all possible economy, we had only five weeks' food. This calculation, or, if you like, this reflection, announced death at the end of forty days ! for, after all, there was no prospect of finding, before then, any means of leaving the desert-island.

The ships which pass by it, sail altogether too far off, to perceive any signal we could make, and then how could we rely on them ? Our provisions could last no more than six weeks, at most, and no ship could pass for six or seven months.

I saw despair coming on, courage began to sink, and cold, snow, ice, and sickness, seemed banded to increase our sufferings. We sank beneath the weight of so much misery. The ship became inaccessible from the ice, which gathered around it ; the cold caused an intolerable sleeplessness ; our sails were far from shielding us from the heavy snows that fell, that year, six feet