

settlement that we have the earliest account of anything of strictly medical interest in Acadia. That year Samuel de Champlain—a name illustrious in Canadian history—was with de Monts at St. Croix, and he has left a most interesting account of a serious malady which attacked the colonists. Here let me quote part of Champlain's narrative:

“During the winter, many of our company were attacked by a certain malady called the mal de la terre, otherwise scurvy, as I have since heard from learned men. There were produced in the mouths of those who had it great pieces of superfluous and drivelling flesh (causing extensive putrefaction), which got the upper hand to such an extent that scarcely anything but liquid could be taken. The teeth became very loose, and could be pulled out with the fingers without its causing them pain. The superfluous flesh was often cut out, which caused them to eject much blood through the mouth. Afterwards a violent pain seized their arms and legs, which remained swollen and very hard, all spotted as with flea bites; and they could not walk on account of the contraction of the muscles, so that they were almost without strength and suffered intolerable pains. They experienced pain also in the loins, stomach and bowels, had a very bad cough and short breath. In a word, they were in such a condition that the majority of them could not rise nor move and could not even be raised up on their feet without falling down in a swoon. So that out of seventy-nine, who composed our party, thirty-five died, and more than twenty were on the point of death. The majority of those who remained well also complained of slight pains and short breath. We were unable to find any remedy for these maladies. A post-mortem examination was made of several to investigate the cause of their malady.

“In the case of many, the interior parts were found mortified, such as the lungs, which were so changed that no natural fluid could be perceived in them. The spleen was serous and swollen. The liver was woody and spotted, without its natural color. The vena cava, superior and inferior, was filled with thick coagulated and black blood. The gall was tainted. Nevertheless, many arteries, in the middle as well as lower bowels, were found in a very good condition. In the case of some, incisions with a razor were made on the thigh where they had purple spots, whence there issued a very black, clotted blood. This is what was observed on the bodies of those infected with this malady. Those who continued sick were healed by spring, which commences in this country in May. That led us to believe that the change of season restored their health, rather than the remedies prescribed.