

Everything froze. The breath that came from their mouths, the very blood in their veins, seemed to freeze. Night and day their limbs were benumbed. Thick ice formed on the sides of their ships, on decks, masts, cordage, on everything to which moisture attached itself. Snow wreathed and curled in at every crevice. Every tree had its load. A walk in the woods was an impossibility, and there was nowhere else to walk. Confined within their narrow domain, and living on salted food, scurvy seized upon the helpless



TRIUMPH OF THE SNOW-PLOUGH.

prisoners. What was to be done? Cartier had recourse to heaven, receiving, however, the same minimum of practical answer that was given by Hercules to Æsop's waggoner. A modern writer of scrupulous accuracy describes naïvely the appeal and its bootlessness: "When eight were dead and more than fifty in a helpless state, Cartier ordered a solemn religious act which was, as it were, the first public exercise of the Catholic religion in Canada, and the origin of those processions and pilgrimages which have since been made in honour of Mary, to claim her intercession with God in great calamities. Seeing that the disease had made such frightful ravages he set his crew to prayer, and made them carry an image or statue of the Virgin Mary over the snow and ice, and caused it to be placed against a tree about an arrow's flight away from the fort. He also commanded that on the following Sunday mass should be sung in that place and before that image, and that all those who were able to walk, whether well or ill, should go in the procession—'singing the seven penitential Psalms of David, with the Litany, praying the Virgin to entreat her dear Son to have pity upon us.'" On that day mass was celebrated