

the St. Lawrence garbed in autumnal beauty, was but ill preparation for the blasts of winter which, in its most intense form of cold and its greatest abundance of ice and snow, was soon to be on them. By the time, indeed, that they had got their vessels into a sort of sheltered enclosure and put up some rough structures for themselves the change had come.

A WINTER OF MUCH SUFFERING

The terrors of that winter can hardly be adequately described. All about the prospective settlers was a boundless area of snow and ice. Their clothing was thin and adapted only to a mild and pleasant clime. Their fears were in proportion to their ignorance and their sufferings from a malignant form of scurvy were as great as from cold and other hardships. Twenty-five of the men died and by the time of early spring, with its first welcome signs of warmth and of the passing away of that over-whelming nightmare of surrounding whiteness, the balance of the little party were tottering in feebleness on the brink of the grave. Fortunately, the Indians, had been kind, though suffering somewhat themselves and in spite of their natural hardness, from the severity of the winter. They had prescribed a simple mixture for the sick which proved efficacious and indeed, probably saved the lives of the remaining white men.

As soon as the loosening ice on the river permitted, Cartier turned two of his ships homeward, leaving one behind to be found 307 years afterwards (1843) sunk in the bed of the St. Charles. Before going he seized Donnacona and nine of his chiefs, as visible trophies for the eye of France and as a lasting, though unintended, monument to his own folly and ingratitude. They died without seeing again their native land, and, in dying, left a legacy of future bitterness and pain to French settlers and the white man generally which it was well for Cartier he could not anticipate.