

How many dead? From a garrison of gallant men-at-arms we had become a charnal house. In six weeks we had lost 60 men. From a hundred at the beginning of autumn we were now scarce forty and February was not gone. We brought the firewood and we buried the dead—picking the frozen clods with infinite toil that we might lay the bones of our comrades beyond the reach of wolves. Sometimes it was the scurvy, sometimes it was the cold, sometimes methinks it was naught but a weak will—or as we say the broken heart; but it mattered not it was the same. More than 20 died in March and although we were now but a handful of skeletons and accustomed to death, I had no thought of sorrow or of grief, so dulled had my spirit become until one morning I found the brave De Troyes drawing with frightful pains his dying breath. With the name of a maid he loved upon his lips the light went out—and with heavy heart I buried him in that crowded ground fain I would have lain down with him.

And now with our commander under the snow what little spirit burned in the best of us seemed to die down, I too bore the signs of the distemper yet to no great extent, for of all the garrison I had labored by exercise to keep myself wholesome and in the woods I had tasted of barks and buds and roots of little herbs hoping to find something akin in its juices to the herb de scorbut which I have known to cure sick sailors. But now I gave over these last efforts for life; for thought I, spring is tardy in these latitudes. Many weeks must yet pass before the Noble Marquis at Montreal (where comforts are) will care to send the promised troop. And the western savages our allies the Illinois, the Ottawais, the Miamis, were they not coming to succor us here and to raid the Iroquois cantons? But of what account is the savage word.

So I thought and I turned myself on my pallet I listened. There was no sound in all the place save the beating of a sleet. "It is appointed," I said within me. "Let the end come." And presently being numb with the cold I thought I was on a sunny hillside in Anjou. It was the time of the grape harvest and the smell of the vines, laughter and sunshine filled the air, young lads and maidens, playmates of my boyhood days came and took me by the hand. * * * A tinge of pain made the vision pass. I opened my eyes upon a huge savage painted and bedaubed after their fashion. It was the grip of his vast fist that had brought me back from Anjou.

"The Iroquois" then I thought "have learned of our extremity and have broken in to finish all. So much the better," and I was for sinking back upon the boards when the savage took from