

Sorely puzzled what to do, Cartier pronounced over his patients a portion of St. John's Gospel, with a prayer not only for the healing of their bodies, but of their souls as well. After that there came what they understood much better—the distribution of gifts.

Before departing Cartier and his friends ascended the beautiful hill above the village. Delighted with the magnificent view of broad river and boundless forests and distant cloudlike mountain, he called the hill *Mont Royal*—Montreal. Cartier would gladly have pressed on up the enticing river that lay before him, past the foaming rapids whose snowy crests he could see flashing to westward, but he had no means of doing so, and the season was growing late. So, turning his back on the "Royal Mountain," he and his companions began to retrace their way to the ships and men they had left on the St. Charles.

At Stadacona Cartier was again kindly received by Donnacona. His men had built a palisaded fort round their ships, and Cartier, thinking it well to be wary in dealing with the savages, whose friendliness might not last, strengthened the little fort with some of the guns from his ships.

Now the face of the country was changed indeed. The winds howled through the leafless forest, great masses of ice began to drift down the St. Lawrence, and soon a solid bridge of ice was formed across the river. But a worse foe than cold attacked the unfortunate explorers. The terrible scurvy broke out among them, and spread until only three or four healthy men were left to wait on the sick. Twenty-six died before April, and the survivors, too weak to break through the ice-bound soil, buried the dead in the snow-drifts till spring should return. Still Cartier did not lose his faith in God, who, as he said, "looked down in pity upon us and sent to us a knowledge of the means of cure."

One of their young guides, who had himself been suffering from scurvy and had recovered, told Cartier of the remedy which had cured him—a decoction from an evergreen called Ameda, supposed to have been the spruce fir. The sick men eagerly tried it, and drank it in such quantities, that in six days they had boiled down a tree as large as a French oak; and very soon all the invalids were restored to health, courage, and hope.

At last the great snow-drifts melted away under the warm spring