

attempt to observe their superstitions, but they are promptly frowned down, and, if contumacious, are expelled from the village. One of them is punished by Divine justice, for within three months he loses all his children by death. The most important agency for retaining these savages in both devotion and morals is the "confraternity of the Holy Family" established among them.

CXXXI. Dablon writes a letter (August 1, 1674) to his superior in France, giving an account of the recent discovery of the Mississippi by Joliet and Marquette, obtained from reports made by the former. He describes the extent and course of the great river, and mentions the tribes dwelling upon its shores. The savages of that region appear gentle and friendly. At the first village that they enter, a magnificent calumet—the pipe of peace—is presented to the Frenchmen. The beauty and fertility of that country, the abundance of game, and the mildness of the climate, delight the travelers. They proceed until, as the Indians inform them, they are but fifty leagues distant from the sea. At this point, fearing that they may be detained as prisoners by the Spaniards, they conclude to go back to Quebec, to inform the governor, as soon as possible, of their discoveries. They return to Mackinac (this time, by the Illinois river route), and Joliet proceeds to Quebec; but he has the misfortune to wreck his canoe above Montreal, losing all his papers, and barely escaping with his life.

Dablon's first comment on this important voyage is, that it opens the way for missions to new tribes, among whom there is a bright prospect for success. He also observes that it is now tolerably certain that