

sult but the fabulous Manuscripts of the *Egyptians* and *Chaldeans*, who were a phanatick superstitious Sort of People. But supposing the *Egyptians* and *Chaldeans* to have invented the Art of Writing, what Credit can we give to the Accounts of Things that are said to have happen'd before the Date of that Invention? In all Probability they knew no more of the Matter than the *Americans*; and upon that Score it was very hard for them to give a faithful Narrative of the Adventures and Exploits of their Ancestors. I am now fully convinced that Tradition is so inconstant, obscure, uncertain, and fallacious, that we cannot pretend to rely upon it. And this Notion I owe to the Savages of *Canada*, who being at a Loss to trace the Truth of what has been transacted in their own Country but 200 Years ago, gave me Occasion to call in Question the Purity and Truth of Tradition. Upon this Lay, you may easily apprehend, that these poor People are as little acquainted with their own History and Origin, as the *Greeks* and *Chaldeans* were with theirs. Let us therefore content ourselves, *my good Friend*, in believing that they are descended of honest old *Adam*, as well as you and I.

I have read some Histories of *Canada*, which were writ at several Times by the Monks, and must own that they have given some plain and exact Descriptions of such Countries as they knew; but at the same time they are widely mistaken in their Accounts of the Manners and Customs of the Savages. The Recollets brand the Savages for stupid, gross, and rustick Persons, uncapable of Thought or Reflection: But the Jesuits give them other Sort of Language; for they intitle them to good Sense, to a tenacious Memory, and to a quick Apprehension season'd with