

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Of a Manuscript containing a Dictionary of the Montagnais Language (in French), composed by Père Antoine Silry, Jesuit Missionary in Canada, in the Seventeenth Century.

He arrived at Quebec, on the 7th of June, 1671, and returned to France, in 1707. He evangelized the Indians of the West during seven or eight years. From thence to Tadousac and the Hudson Bay, for a period of ten years. Returning from these last Missions, he sojourned in Montreal and in Quebec, until his departure for France. (*Relations inédites des Jésuites. Répertoire du Clergé Canadien*, pp. 52 and 53.)

The manuscript, whose description we are undertaking, is composed of 104 sheets, or 208 pages, of strong paper, somewhat faded by Time and much more so by usage. Many sheets bear the imprint of the fingers. It seems as though some drops of water had also fallen on them.

The cover is in moose skin and larger than the book, so as to protect the leaves. The leather, although much worn and a little cracked on the back of the book, seems to have been impermeable.

The volume is four and a half inches long by three and a half inches wide, English measure, inside the cover, which is, as already stated, larger.

The paging is irregular and very often omitted. It seems as though the desire had been to number the pages 1, 2, 3, &c., commencing at each initial letter only. But this system has not been followed, and most of the pages have no number on them.

The writing appears to be that of the seventeenth century, very open and fine, but easily read.

The margin of the pages are covered with signs and points; there are crosses, bars, angles, &c. Unfortunately there is no key by which their signification could be determined.