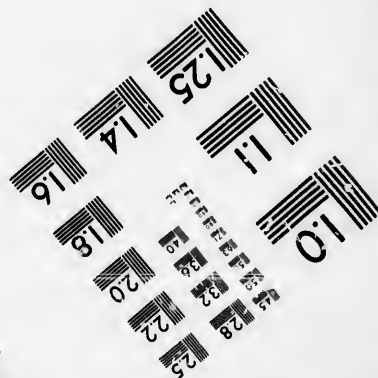
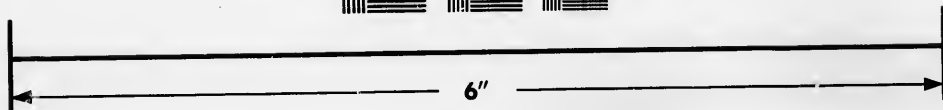
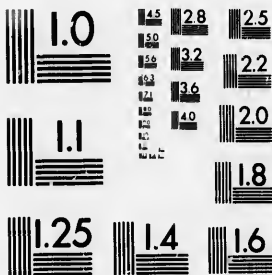


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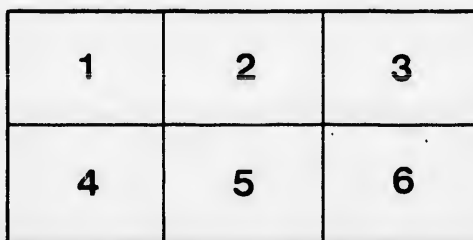
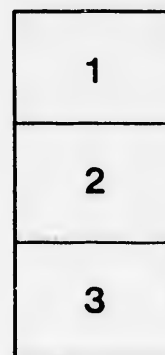
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## THE MISSION OF FATHER RASLES

AS DEPICTED BY HIMSELF.

A Translation from "Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses," Paris, 1781.

BY E. C. CUMMINGS.

*Read before the Maine Historical Society, December 9, 1892.*

A LITTLE more than a hundred and sixty-eight years ago, August 23, 1724, in the course of urgent hostilities between the New England colonists and the native population, a Christian village near what is now Norridgewock, was destroyed, and a Christian missionary, together with a considerable number of his small flock, met a violent death.

At this day we have no occasion to commiserate either the missionary or his savage disciples. They took their share in the struggle of warring interests and civilizations, in an age of military enterprise, and the sacrifices they were called to make were such as seem to be unavoidable in the evolution of those energies through which new and more peaceful worlds are brought into being. It is the privilege of a later and happier age to appreciate martial virtue and pious devotion on whichever side of any great conflict they may have found a conspicuous illustration. And especially with reference to individual men, as we see them doing their work in the stream of human affairs which they cannot control and by which they are borne on to their destiny, we feel obliged to consider attentively!



the troubled current, that we may the better appreciate the behavior of any frail bark found contending with the waters.

A little well-considered chronology is useful for us, if we are to understand the representations of any Jesuit missionary in North America. The Company of Jesus, so called, has probably been more spoken against than any other of the monastic orders, for the simple reason that its trained ability and free methods made it the most efficient of all such orders. Indeed, it might be called the order "of all the talents."

Martin Luther and Ignatius Loyola were born within less than ten years of each other, and both within less than ten years of 1492, and the discovery of a new world. These names, therefore, with that of Columbus, stand for the whole spiritual ferment and worldly enterprise of the sixteenth century. It took, let us say, a hundred years of costly tentative effort to get the forces represented by these names fairly in the field. But when in 1611 Father Biard,<sup>1</sup> the professor of theology, is voyaging with Biancourt, the man of secular enterprise, along our coast from Port Royal to the mouth of the Kennebec, there is an English colony at Jamestown, and the idea of taking possession, both of the continent and of its savage inhabitants, is really shaping the policy both of England and France, as well as of Spain, and awakening a restless zeal in which the motives of adventure, patriotism, and religion, are strangely mingled.

<sup>1</sup> See Extracts from the letters of Father P. Biard, 1612-26. Translated by Prof. Frederick M. Warren. Introduction by John Marshall Brown. Collections of the Maine Historical Society. Series II, Vol. II, p. 411.

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With the English adventurers at this time the national spirit and commercial advantage were moving considerations; and, if the religious motive entered, it was chiefly in behalf of a reforming and self-defensive Christian liberty. But the French, who shared with their Spanish exemplars the Roman faith and discipline, took with them their spiritual guides, and made the conversion of the heathen and the authority of the church a kind of higher rule and argument in all their undertakings in America. Thus in any national or individual enterprises under French auspices, the Jesuits were likely to have a hand; especially, according to Father Biard, in those expeditions that promised abundance of suffering and but little honor—*expeditions beaucoup penibles et peu honorables*.

The Maine Historical Society has in its library three stout and closely printed volumes of Jesuit "Relations" as to missionary operations in New France. Father Biard is at the beginning both of the "Relations," and of the seventeenth century. He addresses himself to Aquaviva, the fifth general of the Jesuits, and probably the most able and adroit spirit that ever had the interests of that ambitious and astute company in charge. He so composed internal dissensions, and adjusted outward relations, that the order practiced and prospered, even under far weaker men, for more than a hundred years. Through its special function of schooling boys, the order at length mastered the art of ruling men and women. It kept the consciences of kings, controlled the intrigues of courtiers, heard the confessions of popes and cardinals, directed

the distribution of patronage, stimulated Church and State in the work of religious persecution and propagandism, came in for a share in the profits of trade and banking, gained houses, colleges, offices, — resources and prestige in every sort; in fact, wrought so famously that its vaulting ambition o'erleaped itself. It roused the powers, both of the world and of the Church, to resistance in self-defense. Portugal moved decisively against the Jesuits, both at home and in her colonies, in 1759. Spain and France followed; and on the twenty-first day of July, 1773, Pope Clement XIV issued his brief for the total and final suppression of the order. It is true, that though the Jesuits had treasured up wrath against the day of wrath, the judgment of Clement XIV held good only forty-one years. For, in the reactionary proceedings that followed the downfall of the First Napoleon, Pope Pius VII saw things in a different light, and reëstablished the suppressed society, according to its original constitution, August 7, 1814.

Father Rasles had been dead for almost half a century when the papal suppression of the Jesuits took effect. He must have become a member of that order during its golden period, when Jesuit professors and tutors were in their greatest efficiency and most commanding reputation, when the youth under their direction were candidates, not only for membership in what was distinctly the most learned and influential order in Christendom, but for special service under the direction of that order, according to individual character and ability.

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Rasles was, of course, trained in the old faith, and in opposition to the reforming ideas. He was of the *Franche Comté*, the same department to which our associate, Mr. Allen, traces the Huguenot settlers in what is now Dresden.<sup>1</sup> He could not have failed to be deeply impressed with the fact that the papal programme of his day announced two leading aims, namely, the extirpation of heresy, even by means of persecution, and the conversion of the heathen in America, even at the cost of martyrdom. No doubt father Rasles was heartily in accord with both these aims. He took the bias of his age, and followed the leading of his party. When his master, Louis XIV, plunged France into war and persecution, and incurred the bitter consequences of humiliation, bankruptcy and the dragonnades, instead, as Parkman says, of "prosperity, progress, and the rise of a middle class," Rasles was loyal to his master, and accepted his lot with the church.

But Rasles was a "chosen vessel," the choice of an elect order, for a peculiar service. His career was not one of ambition and emolument in the subjugation of heresy at home; it was one of toil, suffering and danger, for the conversion of savages over the sea. He was one of the men who embraced a service that promised the greatest amount of suffering and the least possible meed of worldly distinction; and this service he faithfully fulfilled, according to his lights, from the year of his arrival at Quebec, 1689, a young man of thirty-two, to the day of his death, in 1724, at the age of sixty-seven: — thirty-five years of solitary,

<sup>1</sup> See Collections of the Maine Historical Society, Series II, Vol. III, p. 351.

unrelieved labor in a wilderness world and among savage tribes, for at least thirty of which years he was a pioneer of civilization and Christianity in what is now the state of Maine.<sup>1</sup>

But the efforts of our Jesuit missionary did not depend alone upon his diligence and devotion, nor was his influence measured by the docility and obedience of a few savage disciples. He wrought under conditions determined for him by conflicts of thought and conflicts of arms, of which he was both the agent and the victim. Catholic and Jesuit, he was also a Frenchman, and took his humble part in the struggle of France against England for preponderance in Europe and supremacy in North America. It was a war of Titans that welcomed the alliance of pigmies, and gave military instruction to barbarians.

The history of French and English colonization in the New World, taken by itself, is not an edifying story of peaceful competition. It is very largely a military history; but merged in the history of Europe, of which it was a subordinate part, it offers the distressing spectacle of adventurous and loyal subjects always exposed, never adequately supported, harassed in their common industries by savage incursions, or turned aside into forlorn, if not futile, military expeditions, while from time to time the petty raiding is exchanged for something approaching the dignity of civilized warfare, when the great protagonists display their colors upon the field.

<sup>1</sup> As a connecting link between Father Blard and Father Rasles — see General John Marshall Brown's "Mission of the Assumption on the Kennebec, 1646-52," Collections of the Maine Historical Society, Series II, Vol. I, p. 87.

From the year of Rasles' arrival, at the beginning of what is called King William's war, down to the surrender of Canada to the English, settled by treaty in 1763, war between France and England is the regular order, though there was one breathing time of considerable duration, for the contestants to recover their strength, after the treaty of Utrecht, 1713, which ended what here was "Queen Anne's war," in Europe "the war of the Spanish succession."

Cotton Mather calls the period of King William's war *decennium luctuosum* — a ten years agony, or as Mr. Parkman renders, the "woeful decade," and in spite of his dislike of Mather's pedantry, the distinguished historian finds the description not inappropriate to the subsequent war of Queen Anne.

The treaty of Utrecht, however, did not bring a settled peace to the frontier settlers of New England, nor to the solitary missionary and his flock at Norridgewock. But their subsequent contests, ending in the destruction of the village at Old Point, and the death of Father Rasles, are matters of familiar local annals. Mr. Parkman's lucid chapter on the subject in "A Half-century of Conflict," adds nothing material to our previous knowledge. Both he and Dr. Converse Francis — in his Monograph on Father Rasles in Spark's American Biography, make special reference to three letters found in an extensive collection entitled *Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses* — two of these letters written by Father Rasles himself, and the third by Father de la Chasse, Superior of the Jesuit missions in Canada. These letters are in the nature of direct tes-

timony, and though open to cross-examination, they cannot be fairly appreciated in the process of cross-examination, unless the direct testimony has first been fully presented. A few extracts or allusions in a narrative preoccupied with facts regarded from a different point of view can do little more than create a demand for the full original record of an actor in the drama. If we can possess Father Rasles' self-portraiture, the lively drawing out for the satisfaction of relatives in France of how he lived and thought and acted, we are in the way of judging for ourselves how far he speaks with a single-minded reference to the objective truth, and how far he indulges in imaginative constructions of facts according to religious prejudices or party affiliations.

At any rate Father Rasles' letters, one to his brother and the other to his nephew, are evidently written in the expansion and confidence of affectionate familiarity — not under any temptation to conceal his thoughts. Whether we are trying to understand Father Rasles himself or the history of which he was apart, we need to have his drawing, his light and shade, his picture in its connection and completeness, of all the aspect and course of things belonging to a side that was then not ours, but is ours now as much as the other.

We desire that this solitary and brave missionary, in spite of his own errors or ours, may stand in his true place and personality with his devoted predecessors and compatriots of the same society — men who not only hazarded their lives, but suffered deaths of un-

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speakable atrocity with supernatural fortitude and constancy, thanking God for the honor of martyrdom as the crowning testimony to their missionary devotion. No composite photograph will do for such men. From the sunlight in which they individually walked we must get the picture of each individual life, remembering that their conversation was not only in the heaven of their hopes, but also in a passing world now happily passed away.

Father Rasles stands out from the canvas of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries hard at work for his order, his church, his country, and his savage flock. Rumors reach us of how he behaved as a man of his party and of his day. It is for him to tell us how he lived, not as merely the creature and expression of a passing age, but as a man of God, seeking to train a rude and unsettled society for the life to come. This he has told us, not as bidding for general appreciation in a conscious and systematic way, but by simply responding at considerable length, toward the close of his life, to solicitous and pressing inquiries from home, with reference to his missionary experience and labors.

In reading these two letters of Father Rasles it is natural to inquire how far he may have written under a premonition of their one day reaching the public eye. Certainly we owe no small debt to the Society of Jesus for an exemplary care in gathering up such fragments as memoirs for the future historian. These scholarly men had the good sense to appreciate how much the private communications of missionaries might possibly exceed in interest the more formal official

records of missions. Hence through a succession of editors of the highest ability and character, "with the approbation and license of the king," there was compiled from year to year, to be seasonably published as the materials should accumulate, that unique literary monument, amounting in the edition of 1781 to twenty-six volumes, to which Father Rasles has made an important contribution. Four volumes (VI-IX inclusive), are taken up with "Memoirs of America," and this part of the collection was looked upon in its day as quite of its own kind — the revelation of a peopled world with which the oriental civilizations had had nothing to do. The accurate observation and persuasive fidelity to facts which the missionary writers evince are duly recognized.

In the preface to volume VI, obtained from the Boston Public Library, through my friend, the Reverend Edward G. Porter, the missionaries in New France are thus spoken of:—

Compelled in some sort to become savages with these barbarians in order to make of them first men and then Christians, they learned their languages, lived as they lived, ran the woods with them, and in fine lent themselves to all that was not evil, that they might bring them to hear, to love, to esteem and to practice that which is good.

Father Rasles identifies himself with his savages to the extent of giving his recollections of their speeches in the form of direct address, after the manner of the ancient historians; but one can hardly fail to see that his report is not far from their spirit and tenor, though the stenographer was not there.

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I give the two letters entire in the order of time. The letter of Father de la Chasse is an appropriate, almost a necessary, sequel.

The translation is intended to be sufficiently literal, but as the title *Monsieur* was before the French Revolution the note of an exclusive and elevated class in society, I have used as the closest rendering of it an old-fashioned epistolary form, "honoured sir," in which natural affection is qualified by the feeling for rank.

LETTER OF FATHER SEBASTIAN RASLES, MISSIONARY OF THE COMPANY OF JESUS, IN NEW FRANCE, TO HIS NEPHEW.

AT NANRANTSOUAK, THIS 15 OCTOBER, 1722.

*Honoured Sir, My Dear Nephew:—The peace of our Lord:—*

For more than thirty years that I have lived in the midst of forests and with savages, I have been so much occupied with instructing them, and forming them to Christian virtues, that I have scarcely had the leisure for writing frequent letters, even to persons who are the most dear to me. I cannot, however, refuse you the little detail of my occupations which you ask of me. I owe this as a recognition of the friendship which makes you interest yourself so much in what concerns me.

I am in a district of that vast extent of country which lies between Acadia and New England. Two other missionaries are occupied, like myself, with the savage Abnakis, but we are far apart from one another. The savage Abnakis, besides the two villages which they have in the midst of the French colony, have three other considerable villages situated upon the bank of a river. The three rivers flow into the sea to the south of Canada between New England and Acadia.

The village where I dwell is called Nanrantsonak; it is situated upon the bank of a river which reaches the sea thirty leagues from thence. I have built here a church which is suitable and very well appointed (*tres-ornée*). I have held it a duty to spare

nothing, either for its decoration, or for the beauty of the ornaments which serve in our holy ceremonies. Altar-cloths, chasubles, copes, consecrated vessels — all in it is proper, and would be so esteemed in our churches of Europe. I have made myself a little clergy of about forty young savages, who assist at divine service in serge and in surplice. They have their several functions as well for the service of the holy sacrifice of the mass, as for the chanting of the divine office for the benediction of the holy sacrament, and for the processions which are made with a great concourse of savages, who often come from afar to find themselves there. You would be edified with the fine order they observe, and with the piety they evince.

Two chapels have been built about three hundred paces from the village, one dedicated to the most Holy Virgin, and where her statue is seen in relief, is high up the river; the other, dedicated to the guardian angel, is low down the same river. As they are both the one and the other on the path which leads either into the woods or into the fields, the savages never pass that way but they make their prayer. There is a holy emulation among the women of the village as to who shall best adorn the chapel of which they have the care, whenever the procession is to move thither. All that they have of jewelry or of pieces of silk or of India stuff (*d'indienne*), and of other things of this nature, is employed for adornment. Our abundant light contributes not a little to the decoration of the church and the chapels. I have no occasion to be sparing of wax, for the country here supplies me with it in abundance. The isles of the sea are bordered with wild laurels, which in autumn bear berries nearly resembling those of the juniper. The boilers are filled with them and they are boiled with water. As the water boils the green wax rises to the surface and remains above the water. From three bushels (*un minot*) of this berry is produced about four pounds of wax; it is quite pure and beautiful, but not soft or plastic. After many trials I have found that by mixing with it an equal quantity of tallow — beef, mutton or elk, beautiful candles can be made, firm and excellent for use. With twenty-four pounds of wax and as much tallow, two hundred candles can be made of the length of

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more than a foot. An infinity of these laurels is found on the shores of the sea. A single person could easily collect twelve bushels of the berry in a day. This berry hangs in clusters from the branches of the tree. I have sent a branch to Quebec with a cake of the wax ; it was found excellent.

All my neophytes are present without fail twice every day at the church :— in the early morning to hear mass and at evening to assist at the prayer which I make at the going down of the sun. As it is needful to control (*fixer*) the imagination of the savages, too easily distracted, I have composed some prayers of a nature to make the august sacrifice of our alters enter into their minds ; they chant them or else they repeat them in an audible voice during the mass. Besides the preaching which I make for them Sundays and feast days, I pass few working days without making them a short exhortation for the purpose of inspiring a horror of the vices to which their tendency is strongest, or for strengthening them in the practice of some virtue.

After mass I teach the catechism to the children and young people. A great number of aged persons are present at this service and answer with docility the questions put to them. The rest of the morning to mid-day is set apart for hearing all who have anything to say to me. 'Tis then they come in crowds to impart to me their pains and their anxieties, or to communicate to me the matters of complaint they have respecting their associates, or to consult me touching their marriages or other personal affairs. I have to instruct some, to console others, to re-establish peace in families at variance, to calm troubled consciences, and to correct some others with reproofs tempered with sweetness and charity.

In the afternoon I visit the sick, and go through the cabins of those who need some special instruction. If they hold a council, a thing which often happens among savages, they send one of the chief men of the assembly to ask my assistance as to the result of their deliberations. I repair at once to the place where the council is held ; if I judge that they take a wise part, I approve it ; if, on the contrary, I find something to say to their decision, I unfold to them my opinion, which I support by solid reasons, and they conform themselves to it. My advice always shapes their resolutions.

It only remains to refer to the feasts to which I am called. Those invited bring each one a plate of wood or bark; I give the benediction upon the meats; in each plate is placed the morsel prepared. The distribution having been made I say the grace (*les graces*), and each retires, for such is the order of their feasts.

In the midst of these incessant occupations you would hardly know how to believe with what rapidity the days glide away. At times I have hardly the leisure to say my prayers and to take a little rest during the night; for discretion is not the virtue of savages. For some years, however, I have made it a rule not to talk with anyone from evening prayer till after the next morning mass, and I have forbidden them to interrupt me during that time, at any rate except for some reason of importance, as for example to assist one dying, or for some other matter that cannot be put off; so that I have in this time leisure for prayer and for rest after the fatigues of the day.

When the savages go to the sea to pass some months in the pursuit of geese, bustards and other birds, which they find in abundance, they build on an island a church which they cover with bark, and near which they set up a little cabin for my residence. I am careful to take along a portion of the ornaments, and divine service is attended to with the same decency and the same concourse of people as at the village.

You see, my dear nephew, what are my occupations. As to what concerns me personally I assure you that I neither see, nor hear, nor speak, anything but savage. My food is simple and light. I have never been able to acquire the taste for the meat and the smoked fish of the savages; my nourishment is nothing but Indian corn, which is pounded and of which I make every day a kind of porridge that I cook with water. The only relish (*adoncisement*) that I add to it is in mingling a little sugar to correct the insipidity of it. There is no lack of sugar in these forests. In springtime the maples hold a liquor sufficiently like that which the sugar-cane (*cannes des isles*) contains. The women busy themselves with gathering this in vessels of bark, as it is distilled from the trees; they boil it and obtain from it a good enough sugar. The first produced is always the best.

The whole Abnaki nation is Christian and full of zeal for the maintainance of its religion. This attachment to the Catholic faith has hitherto caused the nation to prefer our alliance to the advantages they might realize from the English, their neighbors. These advantages are of great interest to our savages; the facility they have of treating with the English, from whom they are at a distance of only one or two days journey, the convenience of the way, the great cheapness they find in the purchase of the merchandise they require — nothing is more capable of attracting them. On the other hand, in going to Quebec more than fifteen days are required for reaching the place; they must fortify themselves with subsistence for the journey; they have various rivers to cross and frequent carries to make. They are sensible of these inconveniences, and they are by no means indifferent to their own interests. But their faith is infinitely more dear; and they conceive that if they should be detached from our alliance they would find themselves soon without a missionary, without sacraments, without sacrifice, almost without any exercise of religion and in evident danger of being plunged again in their original unbelief. Here is the bond which unites them with the French. It is in vain that they are pressed to break it, be it by the snares that are laid for their simplicity, or by acts of violent aggression, which cannot fail to irritate a community intensely jealous of its rights and of its liberty. These beginnings of misunderstanding cease not to alarm me and to make me fear the dispersion of the flock which Providence has confided to my care for so many years, and for whose sake I would willingly sacrifice that which remains to me of life. Here are the different artifices to which they have recourse for detaching them from our alliance.

The governor of New England sent, some years since, to the region down river, the cleverest of the ministers of Boston, with the object of establishing a school and teaching the children of the savages and supporting them at the government's expense. As the allowance of the minister would increase in proportion to the number of his scholars, he omitted nothing for the purpose of attracting them to himself. He went to seek them, he caressed them, he made them little presents, he pressed them to come and

see him, in fine he tasked himself with many unavailing efforts during two months without being able to gain a single child. The disregard with which they treated his caresses and his invitations did not discourage him. He addressed himself to the savages themselves. He put various questions touching their belief; and from the responses which were made to him took occasion to turn to ridicule the sacraments, purgatory, invocation of saints, beads, crosses, images, the lights of our churches, and all the practices of piety so sacredly observed in the Catholic religion.

I deemed it my duty to set myself against these first sowings of seduction. I wrote a candid letter to the minister, in which I pointed out to him that my Christians had knowledge enough to believe the truths which the Catholic church teaches, but that they had not the skill to dispute about them; that since they were not clever enough to resolve the difficulties which he proposed, it was apparently his design that they should communicate them to me; that I seized with pleasure the occasion he offered me of conferring with him, either by word of mouth or by letters; that I therefore sent him a memorandum (*mémoire*), and begged him to read it with serious attention. In this memorandum of about a hundred pages I proved by Scripture, by tradition and by theological argument, the truths which he had attacked by sufficiently dull jestings. I added in finishing my letter that, if he was not satisfied with my proofs, I looked to him for a refutation precise and based upon theologic reasons, not upon vague argumentations that prove nothing, still less upon injurious reflections which are not in character for our profession, and do not comport with the importance of the matters with which it is occupied.

Two days after having received my letter he departed on his return to Boston, and he sent me a short reply which I was obliged to read several times in order to comprehend the sense, so obscure was the style, and the Latinity so extraordinary. I gathered, nevertheless, by dreaming over it, that he complained that I attacked him without reason; that zeal for the salvation of souls had moved him to show the way to heaven to the savages;

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that for the rest my proofs were ridiculous and childish. Having dispatched to him at Boston a second letter, wherein I took up the faults of his own, he replied at the end of two years, without entering at all upon the matter in question, that I had a surly and captious spirit, such as was the mark of a temperament prone to anger. Thus ended our dispute, which sent away the minister and rendered abortive the design he had formed of seducing my neophytes.

This first trial having met with so little success, recourse was had to another artifice. An Englishman asked permission of the savages to establish on the river a kind of warehouse for the purpose of making trade with them, and he promised to sell them his merchandise much cheaper than they could purchase it even in Boston. The savages who were to find this to their advantage, and who would spare themselves the trouble of a journey to Boston, consented willingly. A little while after, another Englishman asked for the same permission, offering terms yet more advantageous than the first. To him equally the permission was accorded. This easy assent of the savages emboldened the English to establish themselves along the river without asking their consent. They built houses and raised forts, three of which are of stone.

This proximity of the English was agreeable enough to the savages so long as they were unaware of the net that was laid for them, and attended only to the convenience they enjoyed in finding whatever they might want with their new neighbors. But at length seeing themselves little by little, as it were, surrounded by the habitations of the English, they began to open their eyes and to be seized with distrust. They demanded of the English by what right they established themselves, and even constructed forts on their lands. The reply that was made them, namely that the King of France had ceded their country to the King of England, threw them into the greatest alarm; for there is no savage nation that endures otherwise than impatiently that any one should regard it as in subjection to any power whatever. It will call itself the ally of a power but nothing more. Therefore the savages immediately sent a deputation to M. the Marquis

of Vandreuil, governor-general of New France, to assure themselves if it were true that the king had actually so disposed of a country of which he was not the master. It was not difficult to calm their anxieties; one had only to explain the articles of the treaty of Utrecht that concerned the savages, and they appeared content.

About this time a score of savages entered one of the English habitations, either for trade or for rest. They had been there but a little while when of a sudden they saw the house surrounded by a band of nearly two hundred armed men. "We are dead men," cried one of them, "let us sell our lives dear." They were already preparing to hurl themselves upon this troop, when the English, apprised of their resolution, and aware from other experiences of what the savage is capable in the first excess of fury, tried to pacify them by assuring them that they had no evil design, and had come simply to invite some of them to visit Boston for the purpose of there conferring with the governor on the means of maintaining the peace and good understanding which ought to prevail between the two nations. The savages, somewhat too easily persuaded, deputed four of their compatriots to repair to Boston; but when they had arrived the conference with which they had been deluded led to the holding of them as prisoners.

You will be surprised, no doubt, that such a mere handful of savages should think of standing up against a force so numerous as was that of the English. But our savages do numberless acts of much greater hardihood. I will mention only one which will enable you to judge of others.

During the late wars a party of thirty savages was returning from a military expedition against the English. As the savages, and especially the Abnakis, do not know what it is to secure themselves against surprises, they fall asleep as soon as they lie down, without thinking even of posting a sentinel for the night. A party of six hundred English, commanded by a colonel, pursued them, even to their encampment, and finding them sound asleep he surrounded them by his men, assuring himself that not one of them should escape him. One of the savages having

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waked and discovered the English troops, at once gave the alarm to his comrades, crying out according to their wont, "We are dead men, let us sell our lives dearly." Their resolution was instantly taken. They at once formed six platoons of five men each; then, hatchet in one hand and knife in the other, they rushed upon the English with such furious impetuosity, that after having killed sixty men, the colonel in the number, they put the rest to flight.

The Abnakis no sooner learned how their compatriots had been treated in Boston, than they bitterly complained that the law of nations should be so violated in the midst of the peace which was enjoyed. The English answered that they held the prisoners only as hostages for the wrong that had been done them in the killing of some cattle of theirs, and that as soon as this loss should be repaired, which amounted to two hundred francs in beaver fur, the prisoners should be released. Although the Abnakis did not concede the justice of this claim for indemnity, they did not fail to pay it, unwilling to incur the reproach of having abandoned their brothers for so small a consideration. Still, notwithstanding the payment of the contested debt, the restoration of their liberty was refused to the prisoners.

The governor of Boston, apprehensive that this refusal might force the savages to have recourse to a bold stroke, proposed to treat this affair amicably in a conference. The day and place for holding it were arranged. The savages presented themselves with Father Rasles, their missionary. Father de la Chasse, superior-general of these missions, who at that time was making his visit, was present also. But Monsieur, the governor, did not appear. The savages augured ill of his absence. They adopted the plan of giving him to understand their sentiments by a letter written in Savage, in English, and in Latin, and Father de la Chasse, who is master of these three languages, was charged with writing it. It might seem of no use to employ any other than the English language, but the Father was pleased that the savages on their part should make sure that the letter contained nothing but what they had dictated, and that on the other hand the English should be placed beyond the possibility of doubting

the faithfulness of the English translation. The purport of this letter was : 1. That the savages could not understand why their compatriots were kept in their confinement after the promise had been given of setting them at liberty as soon as the two hundred francs in beaver fur should be paid. 2. That they were not less surprised to see that their country was taken possession of without their consent. 3. That the English would have to depart from them as soon as possible and to set the prisoners at liberty ; that they should expect their answer in two months, and that if after that time satisfaction should be denied them they would know how to do justice to themselves.

It was in the month of July of the year 1711, that this letter was taken to Boston by certain Englishmen who had been present in the conference. As the two months passed without the coming of any response from Boston, and as moreover the English ceased to sell to the Abnakis powder, lead and means of subsistence, as they had done previously to this dispute, our savages were disposed to resort to reprisals. It required all the influence which Monsieur the Marquis of Vaudreuil could exert upon their minds to induce them to suspend for a little while yet their entrance upon active measures of hostility.

But their patience was pressed to the last extremity by two acts of hostility which the English committed toward the end of December, 1721, and at the beginning of the year 1722. The first was the carrying off of Monsicur de Saint Castine. This officer is a lieutenant of our troops. His mother was an Abnaki, and he has always lived with our savages, whose esteem and confidence he has merited to such a degree that they have chosen him for their commanding general. In this character he could not avoid taking part in the conference of which I have just spoken, where he exerted himself to adjust the claims of the Abnakis, his brethren. The English made of this a crime. They sent a small vessel toward the place of his residence. The captain took care to conceal his force with the exception of two or three men whom he left upon the deck. He sent an invitation to Monsieur de Saint Castine, to whom he was known, to come on board his vessel to partake of refreshments. Monsieur de

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Saint Castine, who had no reason for entertaining suspicions, repaired thither alone, and without following. But hardly had he appeared when they set sail and brought him to Boston. There he was kept on the prisoner's stool and interrogated as a criminal. He was asked among other things for what reason and in what capacity he had been present at the conference which was held with the savages; what signified the uniform (*l'habit d'ordonnance*) in which he was dressed, and if he had not been deputed to this assembly by the governor of Canada. Monsieur de Saint Castine replied that by his mother he was Abnaki; that he passed his life among the savages; that his compatriots having established him as chief of their nation, he was obliged to enter into their assemblies for the purpose of there upholding their interests; that in this capacity alone he had been present at the last conference; that for the rest the dress which he wore was not a uniform as they imagined; that indeed it was suitable and well enough trimmed (*garni*), but that it was not above his condition, independently even of the honor which he had of being an officer of our troops

Monsieur our governor, having learned the detention of Monsieur de Saint Castine, wrote immediately to the governor of Boston to make complaint on his behalf. He received no reply to his letter. But about the time the English governor had reason to expect a second remonstrance, he restored his liberty to the prisoner, after having kept him shut up for five months.

The enterprise of the English against myself was the second act of hostility which succeeded in irritating to excess the Abnaki nation. A missionary can hardly fail of being an object of hatred to these gentlemen. The love of religion which he seeks by all means to plant in the heart of the savages, strongly binds these neophytes to our alliance, and withdraws them from that of the English. Also they regard me as an invincible obstacle to the design which they have of spreading themselves over the lands of the Abnakis, and of appropriating little by little this territory which is between New England and Acadia. They have often tried to carry me away from my flock, and more than

once a price has been set upon my head. It was toward the end of January of the year 1722 that they made a new attempt, which had no other success than to manifest their ill will in regard to me.

I had remained alone in the village with a small number of old and infirm people, while the rest of the savages were at the chase. This time appeared favorable for surprising me, and with this purpose they sent a detachment of two hundred men. Two young Abnakis who were hunting along the seashore learned that the English had entered the river. Immediately they turned their steps in that direction to observe their march. Having discovered them at ten leagues from the village, they came on before, traversing the land, to give me warning, and to hasten the retirement of the old men, the women and children. I had only time to swallow the consecrated wafers (*consumer les hosties*), and to pack in a little box the sacred vessels, and to make my escape to the woods. The English reached the village at evening, and not having found me, they came the next day to seek me, even to the place of our retreat. They came within gunshot when we discovered them. All that I could do was to bury myself with precipitation in the forest. But as I had not time to take my snowshoes, and as moreover there remained to me much weakness from a fall, in which some years before I had the thigh and the leg broken, it was not possible for me to fly very far. The only resource that remained to me was to hide myself behind a tree. They at once ran through the various footpaths made by the savages when they went in search of wood, and they came within eight paces of the tree which covered me, and where naturally they ought to have perceived me, for the trees were despoiled of their leaves; nevertheless, as if they had been held back by an invisible hand, they all at once retired upon their steps, and took again the route to the village.

Thus by a special protection of God I escaped their hands. They pillaged my church and my little house. By that means they almost forced me to die of hunger in the woods. It is true that when my adventure was known in Quebec provisions were immediately sent me. But they could not arrive otherwise than

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These reiterated insults drove our savages to the conclusion that they had no more answer to look for, and that it was time to repel violence and to make open force succeed to pacific negotiations. On their return from the chase and after having put their seed into the ground they took the resolution to destroy the English habitations recently constructed and to remove to a distance from their abodes those restless and formidable neighbors, who little by little were gaining a foothold upon their lands and were planning to reduce them to slavery. They sent a deputation into different villages of the savages to get them interested in their cause and to engage them to lend a hand under the necessity that was upon them of making a just defense. The deputation had its success. The war song was chanted among the Hurons of Lorette and in all the villages of the Abnaki nation. Nanrantsonak was the place appointed for the assembling of the warriors in order that they might agree together upon the plan of operations.

In the meantime the Nanrantsonakians moved down the river; arrived at its mouth they took away three or four little buildings of the English. Then coming up the same river, they pillaged and burnt the new houses which the English had built. They nevertheless abstained from all violence toward the inhabitants, they even allowed them to depart to their homes with the exception of five whom they kept as hostages till their compatriots detained in the prisons of Boston should be restored to them. This moderation of the savages did not have the effect which they had hoped. On the contrary an English party, having found sixteen Abnakis asleep on an island, opened a general fire (*decharge*) upon them by which five of them were killed and three wounded.

Thus we have a new signal of the war which is likely to flame forth between the English and the savages. The latter look for no support from the French, by reason of the peace which reigns between the two nations; but they have a resource in all the other savage nations, who will not fail to enter into their quarrel and to take up their defense.

My converts touched by the peril to which I found myself exposed in their village, often pressed me to retire for a while to Quebec. But what will become of the flock, if it is deserted by its shepherd? There is nothing but death which can separate me from it. In vain they represent to me that in the event of my falling into the hands of their enemies the least that can happen to me is to languish the rest of my days in a hard prison. I shut their mouths with the words of the apostles which the divine grace has deeply graven upon my heart. Have no anxiety, I say to them, as regards me. I fear not the threats of those who hate me without my having deserved their hatred, and I esteem not my life longer dear to myself, provided I finish my course and the ministry of the word which has been committed to me by the Lord Jesus. Pray Him, my dear nephew, to strengthen in me this sentiment which comes only from his mercy, that I may be able to live and die without ceasing to labor for those lost and neglected souls which are the purchase of His blood, and which He has deigned to commit to my care.

I am, etc.

LETTER FROM FATHER SEBASTIAN RASLES, MISSIONARY OF THE COMPANY OF JESUS, IN NEW FRANCE, TO HIS BROTHER.

AT NANRANTSOUAK, THE 12TH OCTOBER, 1723.

*Honoured Sir, and Very Dear Brother:—The peace of our Lord:—*

I cannot longer refuse to comply with the affectionate entreaties which you make in all your letters, that I would inform you somewhat in detail of my occupations and of the character of the savage peoples, in the midst of whom Providence has placed me for so many years. I do this the more readily that in yielding to the desires so urgently expressed on your part I shall be satisfying your tenderness more than your curiosity.

It was the twenty-third of July, 1689, that I embarked at La Rochelle, and after a voyage of three months sufficiently fortunate, I arrived at Quebec the thirteenth of October, of the same year. I applied myself at first to learning the language of the savages.

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This language is very difficult; for it is not enough to study the terms and their signification, and to secure a supply of words and phrases; it is necessary also to know the turn and arrangement of words and phrases which the savages employ, and this one can catch only by constant intercourse and communication of thought with these people. I went, therefore, to dwell in a village of the Abnaki nation, situate in a forest which is only three leagues from Quebec. This village was inhabited by two hundred savages, nearly all Christians. Their cabins were ranged almost like mansions in towns. An inclosure of stakes, high and compact, formed a kind of wall, which gave them protection from the incursions of their enemies.

Their cabins are very readily set up; they plant some poles which are joined at the top, and cover them with great pieces of bark. The fire is made in the center of the cabin, and they spread rush mats all around, upon which they sit during the day, and take their rest during the night.

The clothing of the men consists of a coat of skin or else of a piece of red or blue cloth. That of the women is a covering which reaches from the neck to the knees, and which they dispose quite neatly. They wear another covering upon the head, which comes down to the feet, and which serves them as a mantle. Their stockings only reach from the knee to the ankle. Moccasins made of elk hide, and lined with fur or woolen take the place of shoes. This foot-gear is absolutely necessary for the proper adjustment of snow-shoes, by means of which they walk easily over the snow. These snow-shoes, made of lozenge shape, are sometimes more than two feet long and a foot and a half wide. It did not seem to me that I could ever walk with such machines. When, however, I made the attempt, I found myself all at once so skillful, that the savages could not believe that I was using them for the first time. The invention of the snow-shoe is one of great utility to the savages, not only for running over the snow, with which the earth is covered a great part of the year, but especially for engaging in the chase of beasts, and above all of the elk. These animals, larger than the largest oxen of France, go only with difficulty over the snow; so it is not

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difficult for the savages to overtake them, and they often kill them with a simple knife at the end of a staff. They get nourishment from their flesh, and having well dressed the skin, in which they are clever, they find a market for it with the French and English, who give them in exchange coats, blankets, kettles, guns, hatchets and knives.

To give you an idea of a savage, picture to yourself a tall man, active, of tawny complexion, without beard, with black hair and teeth whiter than ivory. If you will see him in full dress, you will find as the sum total of his finery what is called wampum (*rassade*.) It is a kind of shell or stone, that is fashioned in the form of little kernels, some black and others white, which they string and combine so as to represent various figures very regular, which have a decorative effect. It is with this bead-work that the savages bind and braid their hair over the ears and at the back of the head; they make of it pendants for the ears, collars, garters, girdles of the width of five or six inches; and with this kind of ornaments they hold themselves in much higher esteem than does a European with all his gold and his jewels.

The occupation of the men is the chase and war; that of the women is to stay in the village and there with bark to make baskets, workbags, boxes, porringers, plates, etc. They sew the bark with roots and make various articles of furniture very neatly wrought. The canoes in like manner are made of a single piece of bark, but the largest of them can hardly hold more than six or seven persons. It is with these canoes made of a bark, which has scarcely more than the thickness of a crown-piece (*écu*), that they pass arms of the sea, and navigate the most dangerous rivers and lakes of four or five hundred leagues in circuit. I have made many voyages in this way without having run any risk. Only it once happened that in crossing the river St. Lawrence I found myself suddenly enveloped in blocks of ice of an enormous size, and the canoe was crushed. At once the two savages who were conducting me cried out,—“We are dead men, it is all over with us, we must perish.” Nevertheless making an effort they leaped upon one of the floating masses of ice. I did the same, and after drawing out the canoe we brought it to the extreme edge of the

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ice. There we had to betake ourselves again to the canoe to reach another mass of ice, and so from one ice pack to another we reached at last the river bank with no other damage than that of being well drenched and benumbed with cold.

The savages have a peculiar tenderness for their infants. They place them on a little piece of board covered with a cloth and with a little bear-skin, in which they wrap them, and this is their cradle. The mothers carry them on their backs in a way that is comfortable for the infants and for themselves.

Hardly do the boys begin to walk ere they try their hand in the use of the bow. They become so adroit at the age of from ten to twelve years, as seldom to miss killing the bird at which they shoot. I have been surprised at this, and should have found it hard to believe if I had not been a witness of it.

What shocked me most when I began to live with the savages was to see myself obliged to take my meals with them: nothing more disgusting. After having filled their boiler with meat, they let it boil at most three-quarters of an hour, after which they take it from the fire; they serve it in porringers of bark and distribute it to all who are in their cabin. Each one bites into the meat as one would into a morsel of bread. This spectacle did not give me much appetite, and they very soon observed my repugnance. "Why do you not eat?" said they. I replied that I was not in the habit of eating meat in this way without adding to it a little bread. "You must conquer yourself," they rejoined; "is that so difficult for a patriarch who knows how to pray perfectly? We overcome ourselves certainly — we on our part — in order to believe what we do not see." No more place for deliberation after this. It is necessary to conform one's self to their manners and their usages, in order to deserve their confidence and gain them to Jesus Christ.

Their meals are not regulated as in Europe. They live from hand to mouth. So long as they have wherewith to make good cheer, they profit by it without troubling themselves as to whether they shall have something to live upon in the days to come. They are passionately fond of tobacco; men, women, girls, all smoke almost continually. To give them a morsel of tobacco is to do them a greater pleasure than to give them their weight in gold.

Early in June, and when the snow is nearly all melted they plant their *skamgnar*, which is what we call corn of Turkey or corn of India. Their way of planting it is to make with the fingers or with a little stick different holes in the ground, and to throw into each eight or nine kernels, which they cover with the same earth that they have dug out in making the hole. Their harvest is reached at the end of August.

It is among this people which passes for the least gross of all our savages that I served my missionary apprenticeship. My principal occupation was the study of their language. It is very difficult to learn, especially when one has no other masters than the savages. They have several vocal elements which they utter only from the throat without making any movement of the lips; ou, for example, is of this number, and therefore in writing we mark it by the figure 8 in order to distinguish it from other elements. I passed a part of every day in their cabins to hear them talk. I had to bring an extreme attention to combine what they were saying and to conjecture the meaning of it.

Sometimes I hit the mark, but oftener I was in error, because not being fashioned to the use of their guttural letters, I uttered half the words, and so afforded them occasion to laugh.

At last, however, after five months of continual application, I came to understand all their terms; but that did not suffice for expressing myself according to their taste. I had still a long way to make to catch the turn and genius of the language, which is totally different from the genius and the turn of our languages in Europe. To shorten the time, and put myself sooner in a condition to exercise my functions, I made choice of some savages who had the most wit and who spoke the best. I repeated to them rudely certain articles of the catechism, and they rendered me in all the delicacy of their language. I soon placed them upon paper also, and by this means I made for myself in no very long time a dictionary, and a catechism which contained the principles and the mysteries of religion.

It cannot be denied that the language of the savages has real beauties, and a certain something of energy not easily defined in the turn and manner in which they express themselves. I will

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give you an example. Were I to ask you why God had created you, you would answer me, that it is to know him, love him and serve him, and by this means merit eternal glory. Let me put the same question to a savage, and in the turn of his language he will answer me thus : The great Spirit has had thoughts of us ; would that they might know me, that they might love me, that they might honor me, for then I would make them enter into my illustrious felicity. So if I were to say to you in their style that you would have much difficulty in learning the savage language, this is how I should have to express it : I think of you, my dear brother, that there will be a deal of trouble in learning the savage language.

The language of the Hurons is the master speech of the savages ; and when one possesses that, in less than three months he can make himself understood by any of the five nations of the Iroquois. It is the most majestic and at the same time the most difficult of all the savage languages. This difficulty arises not only from their guttural letters, but still more from the diversity of accents ; for often two words composed of the same characters have significations totally different. Father Chaumont, who has dwelt fifty years among the Hurons, has composed a grammar of their language, which is very useful to those newly arrived at this mission. Nevertheless, a missionary is happy when, even with this aid, he can after ten years of constant labor express himself elegantly in this language.

Each savage nation has its peculiar language : thus the Abnakis, the Hurons, the Iroquois, the Algonquins, the Illinois, the Miamis, etc., have each their language. One has no book for learning these languages, and even if one had, it would be sufficiently useless. Usage is the only master that can instruct us. As I have labored in four different missions among savages, namely, among the Abnakis, the Algonquins, the Hurons, and the Illinois, and have been obliged to learn these different languages, I will give you a sample, that you may perceive the slight relation that exists between them. I have chosen a stanza of a hymn on the Holy Sacrament, which is commonly chanted during the mass at the elevation of the Holy Host, and which begins with these

words: *O Salutaris Hostia*. Here is the translation in verse of this stanza in the four languages of as many different nations.

IN THE ABNAKI LANGUAGE.

Kighist Si-nuanur8inns  
Spem kik papili go ii damek  
Nemiani 8i k8idan ghabenk  
Taha saii griline.

IN THE ALGONQUIN LANGUAGE.

K8crais Jesus teg8senam  
Nera 8eul ka Stisian  
Ka rio vllighe miang  
Vas mama vik umong.

IN THE HURON LANGUAGE.

Jes8s 8to etti xichie  
8to etti skuaalichi-axe  
I chierche axera8ensta  
D'aotierti xeata-8ien.

IN THE ILLINOIS LANGUAGE.

Pekiziane manet 8e  
Piaro nile hi Nanghi  
Keninama 8i 8 Kangha  
Mero Sinang 8siang hi.

Which means in English: —

O saving Sacrifice, who art continually offered up, and who givest life, thou by whom man enters into Heaven, we are all assaulted, now strengthen us.

It was about two years that I staid with the Abnakis, when I was recalled by my superiors. They appointed me to the mission of the Illinois, who had just lost their missionary. I went therefore to Quebec, where, after having employed three months in the study of the Algonquin language, I embarked the thirteenth of August in a canoe on my journey to the Illinois. Their country is at a distance of more than eight hundred leagues from Quebec. You judge well that so long a journey in these barbarous lands could not be made without running great risks and suffering many

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hardships. I had to traverse lakes of an immense extent, and where tempests are as frequent as upon the sea. True, one has the advantage of setting foot upon the earth every evening; but one is fortunate when one finds some flat rock where one can pass the night. When showers fall the only means of protection is to turn the canoe over and get under it. Still greater dangers are met upon the rivers, chiefly in those parts where the current is extremely rapid. Then the canoe flies like an arrow, and if it happens to strike one of the rocks that are found in abundance, it is broken into a thousand pieces. This mishap befel some of those who accompanied me in other canoes, and it is by a singular protection of the divine goodness that I did not meet the same fate, for many times my canoe grazed the rocks without taking the least injury. Besides, one is liable to suffer the most cruel hunger. The length and the difficulty of such voyages permits one to take along only a sack of Indian corn. It is taken for granted that the chase will furnish subsistence by the way; but if game fails one finds one's self exposed to days of fasting. Then all the resource that one has is to search for a kind of leaves which the savages name *Kengnessanach*, and the French call rock tripe (*tripes de roches*). One might take these leaves for chervil, whose shape they have, if they were not much larger. They are served either boiled or roasted. The latter, of which I have eaten, are the less disgusting.

I had not to suffer much with hunger before reaching the lake of the Hurons; but it was otherwise with my fellow voyagers. The bad weather having scattered their canoes they were unable to rejoin me. I was the first to arrive at *Missilimakinak*, whence I sent them provisions without which they would have died of hunger. They had passed seven days without other nourishment than that of a crow, which they had killed more by accident than address, for they had not the strength to hold themselves upright.

The season was too far advanced for continuing my journey to the Illinois, from whom I was still distant by about four hundred leagues. Thus I was obliged to remain at *Missilimakinak*, where there were two of our missionaries, one among the Hurons, the other with the *Outaouacks*. These last are very superstitious,

and much attached to the juggleries of their medicine-men (*charlatans*). They attribute to themselves an origin equally absurd and ridiculous. They pretend to come from three families and each family is made up of five hundred persons.

Some are of the family of *Michabou*, that is to say, of the Great Hare. They maintain that this Great Hare was a man of prodigious height; that he stretched nets in water eighteen fathoms deep, and that the water hardly came up to his armpits; that one day during the deluge he sent the beaver to discover the earth, but that this animal not having returned, he dispatched the otter, who brought back a little earth covered with foam; that he repaired to that part of the lake where this earth was found, which formed a little island, that he walked in the water all around it, and that this island became extraordinarily large. On this ground they attribute to him the creation of the earth. They add that after having achieved this work he flew away into heaven, which is his ordinary residence, but that before quitting the earth he gave direction that, when his descendants should come to die, their bodies should be burned, and that their ashes should be thrown into the air, in order that they might be able to raise themselves more easily towards heaven; since if they should fail in this, the snow would not cease to cover the earth, their lakes and rivers would remain frozen, and so, not being able to catch fish, which is their ordinary food, they would all die in the spring time.

In fact, it is only a few years since, that the winter having been much harder than usual, there was general consternation among the savages of the Great Hare family. They had recourse to their accustomed juggleries, they came together many times to advise about the means of dissipating this snow enemy, which persistently remained upon the earth, when an old woman approached them. "My children," said she, "you are without understanding, you know the orders that the Great Hare left to burn the bodies of the dead and to throw their ashes to the wind, in order that they may return more readily to heaven their native land, and you have neglected these orders in leaving at some days' journey from here a dead man without burning him, as if he were not of

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the family of the Great Hare. Repair your fault without delay, take care of burning him, if you mean that the snow shall disappear." "Thou art right, mother," they answered, "thou hast more wit than we, and the counsel thou givest us restores us to life." They immediately deputed twenty-five men to go and burn this body; they took about fifteen days in the journey; and meanwhile the thaw came, and the snow departed. The old woman who had given the advice was loaded with praises and presents, and the event, altogether natural though it was, served very much to confirm them in their foolish and superstitious credulity.

The second family of the *Outaouacks* claim to have come from *Namepich*, that is to say, from the Carp. They say that a carp having deposited eggs upon the river bank, and the sun having darted his rays into them, there was formed of them a woman from whom they are descended. Thus they call themselves of the family of the Carp.

The third family of the *Outaouacks* attributes its origin to the paw of a *Machova*, that is to say, of a bear, and they say that they are of the family of the bear, but without explaining the manner of their coming forth. When they kill any one of these animals, they make him a feast of his own flesh, they speak to him, they harangue him: "Do not have a thought against us," they say to him, "because we have killed thee; thou hast understanding, thou seest that our children suffer hunger, they love thee, they will make thee enter into their bodies, is it not glorious to be eaten by a chieftain's children?"

It is only the family of the Great Hare that burn the dead, the two other families inter them. When some chieftain is dead, a vast coffin is prepared, where after having laid the body to rest clothed in its most beautiful garments, they inclose with it its blanket, its gun, its provision of powder and lead, its bow, its arrows, its boiler, its plate, some food, its war-club, its box of vermilion, some collars of porcelain, and all the presents made according to custom at his death. They imagine that with this outfit he will make his journey more prosperously in the other world, and that he will be better received by the great chieftains

of the nation, who will conduct him with them into a place of delights. While all this is set to rights in the coffin, the relatives of the dead assist at the ceremony by weeping after their manner, that is to say, by chanting in a mournful tone, and moving in cadence a staff to which they have attached a number of little bells.

Where the superstition of these peoples seems the most extravagant is in the worship they render to that which they call their *Manitou*. As they know hardly anything but the beasts that they live with in the forests, they imagine that in these beasts, or rather in their skins or in their plumage is a kind of spirit (*génie*) which governs all things, and which is the master of life and of death. According to them there are *Manitous* common to the whole nation, and there are particular *Manitous* for each person. *Oussakita*, say they, is the great *Manitou* of all the beasts which walk upon the earth, or which fly in the air. It is he who governs them; so when they go to the chase they offer him tobacco, powder, lead and skins well dressed, which they attach to the end of a pole, and raise into the air; "*Oussakitu*," they say to him, "we give thee to smoke, we offer thee wherewith to kill beasts, deign to accept these presents and permit not the beasts to escape our darts; let us kill a great number of them, and the fattest, that our children may not lack either for clothing or food."

They name *Michibichi* the *Manitou* of waters and the fishes, and they make to him a sacrifice very similar, when they go to the fishing, or when they undertake a voyage. This sacrifice consists in throwing into the water tobacco, food and boilers, and in asking of him that the waters of the river flow more slowly, that the rocks break not their canoes, and that he accord them an abundant catch.

Besides these common *Manitous*, each man has a particular one of his own, which is a bear, or a beaver, or a bustard, or some other beast. They wear the skin of this animal to the war, to the chase, and in their voyages, persuading themselves that it will preserve them from all danger, and that it will make them succeed in their enterprises.

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presented to his imagination in sleep is generally the one on which his choice falls. He kills an animal of this kind, and places its skin, or its plumage if it is a bird, in the place of honor in his cabin, he gets ready a festival in its honor, in the course of which he makes to it a harangue in terms of the utmost respect, after which it is recognized as his *Manitou*.

As soon as I saw the spring arrive, I left *Missilimakinak* to make my way to the Illinois. I found on my route various savage nations, among others the *Muskoutings*, the *Jakis*, the *Omi-koues*, the *Iripegouans*, the *Outagamis*, etc. All these nations have their own language, but in any other respect they do not differ from the *Outaouacks*. A missionary who resides at the bay of the Puants makes excursions from time to time among these savages to instruct them in the truths of religion.

After forty days travel I entered the river of the Illinois, and having advanced fifty leagues I arrived at their first village, which was of three hundred cabins, all of four or six fires. A fire is always for two families. They have eleven villages in their nation. The day after my arrival I was invited by the principal chief to a grand banquet given by him to the most considerable men of the nation. He had caused several dogs to be killed for the occasion; a feast of this sort passes among the savages for something magnificent, and for this reason it is called the feast of the Chieftains. The ceremonies observed are the same as among all these nations. It is customary in these feasts for the savages to deliberate upon their most important affairs, as for example, when it is a question either of undertaking a war against their neighbors or of bringing one to an end by overtures of peace.

When all those bidden had arrived they ranged themselves all around the cabin, sitting either on the bare earth or on mats. Then the chief rose and began his address. I assure you that I admired his flow of words, the justice and force of the reasons which he set forth, and the eloquent turn which he gave them, the choiceness and delicacy of the expressions with which he adorned his discourse. I am convinced that if I could have put into writing what this savage said to us on the spur of the moment and without preparation, you would readily

agree with me that the cleverest Europeans, after a good deal of meditation and study, could hardly compose a discourse more solid or better turned.

The speech ended, two savages, who performed the function of gentlemen in waiting, distributed plates to all the assembly, and each plate was for two guests. They ate conversing together of indifferent matters, and when the banquet was finished they retired, carrying away, according to their custom, what had been left in their plates.

The Illinois do not give those feasts, which are common among various other savage nations, in which one is obliged to eat all that has been served to him, even though he should burst for it. When any one who has not the capacity to observe this ridiculous law finds himself at such a feast, he appeals to one whom he knows to be of better appetite: "My brother," he says to him, "have pity upon me, I am dead if you do not give me life. Eat this which is left, I will make you a present of such a thing." It is the only way they have of coming out of their difficulty. The Illinois clothe themselves only up to the waist; and as to the rest they go quite naked. Various sections (*compartiments*), occupied with all sorts of figures which they imprint ineffaceably upon the body, take the place of garments. It is only in visits which they make or when they are present in the church that they wrap themselves in a covering of dressed skin during the summer, and in the winter with a dressed skin, with the hair left on it, for the sake of warmth. They adorn the head with feathers of various colors, of which they make garlands and crowns, which they adjust with considerable taste (*assez proprement*). They take care above all to paint the face in different colors, especially vermilion. They wear collars and pendants from the ears made of little stones, which they cut in the form of jewels. Of these there are blue, and red, and white as of alabaster; a plate of porcelain must be added as a boundary of the collar. The Illinois believe that these fantastic ornaments impart grace and draw to them respect.

When the Illinois are not engaged in war or the chase, they pass the time in games, or in feasts, or in dancing. They have

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two sorts of dances — some in sign of rejoicing, to which they invite the women and girls that are most distinguished, others for marking their sadness at the death of the most highly considered members of their nation. It is by these dances that they seek to honor the dead man and to wipe away the tears of his relatives. All have the right to procure weeping of this sort for the death of those near to them, provided they make presents according to this intention. The dances hold out a longer or shorter time according to the price and worth of the presents, and afterwards these are distributed to the dancers. Their custom is not to bury the dead. They wrap them in skins and attach them by the head and the feet to the tops of trees. Outside the seasons of games, feasts and dances, the men remain quietly upon their mats, and pass the time either in sleeping or in making bows, arrows, calumets and other articles of this nature. As for the women they work like slaves from morning till night. It is for them to cultivate the earth, and to plant the Indian corn during the summer; and after the winter sets in they are busy at making mats, dressing skins, and at many other kinds of work, since their first care is to provide the cabin with all that is necessary.

Of all the nations of Canada none live in so great abundance of everything as the Illinois. Their rivers are covered with swans, bustards, geese and teal. Almost anywhere one may find a prodigious multitude of turkeys, that go in flocks, sometimes to the number of two hundred. They are larger than those seen in France. I had the curiosity to weigh some, that were of the weight of thirty-six pounds. They have at the neck a kind of beard of hair half a foot long. Bears and stags are in the greatest abundance. One sees there also an infinite number of buffaloes (*boeufs*) and roebucks. Hardly a year passes when they do not kill more than a thousand roebucks and more than two thousand buffaloes. One sees on the prairies, as far as the eye can reach, four or five thousand buffaloes feeding. They have a hump on the back and the head extremely large. Their skin, except at the head is covered with curly hair soft like wool; the flesh is naturally salt, and it is so tender (*légère*) that though it be eaten entirely raw it causes no indigestion. When they have killed a buffalo which

seems to them too lean, they content themselves with taking the tongue out of it, and go on to seek for a fatter one.

Arrows are the principal arms which they use in war and in the chase. These arrows are pointed at the end with a stone cut and filed in the form of a serpent's tongue. In default of a knife they use them also for dressing the animals which they kill. They are so expert in the use of the bow, that they almost never miss their aim, and they shoot with such rapidity that they will let fly a hundred arrows before another will have loaded his gun.

They put themselves to but little trouble in working at nets suitable for fishing in the rivers, because the abundance of game of all sorts which they find for their subsistence, renders them comparatively indifferent as regards fish. Still, when the fancy takes them to have some, they embark in a canoe with bows and arrows; they hold themselves erect the better to discover the fish, and as soon as they have caught sight of one they pierce it with an arrow.

The unique method among the Illinois of winning public esteem and veneration, as among the other savages, is to make for one's self the reputation of a clever hunter, and, better still, of a good warrior; it is in this chiefly that they make their merit to consist, and it is this which they call being really a man. They are so full of passion for this glory, that they are seen to undertake voyages of four hundred leagues in the midst of forests, to make a slave, or to carry away the scalp of a man whom they shall have killed. They make no account of the fatigues and long fasting which they have to endure, especially when they near the lands of their enemies; for then they dare not indulge in the chase, for fear that the beasts having been merely wounded, may escape with an arrow in the body, and so give notice to their enemies to put themselves in a state of defense. For their manner of making war, the same as among all the savages, is to surprise their enemies. Hence it is that they send scouts to observe their number and their march, or to ascertain if they are on their guard. According to the report made to them, either they put themselves in ambuscade, or else they make an irruption into their cabins, war-club in hand (*le casse-tête en main*), and they do not

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fail of killing some before they have been able to dream of defending themselves.

The war-club is made of stag-horn or of wood in form of a cutlass with a great knob at the end. They hold the war-club in one hand and a knife in the other. As soon as they have struck a hard blow on the head of their enemy they cut around it with the knife and take away the scalp with a surprising swiftness.

When a savage comes back to his country loaded with a number of scalps, he is received with great honors; but it is the height of glory for him, when he makes prisoners, and brings them home alive. On their arrival all the village is out and ranged in hedge-rows to make a lane through which the prisoners are to pass. This reception is extremely cruel. Some tear out their nails; others cut off their fingers or ears; still others heap blows upon them with sticks.

After this first reception the elders meet together to deliberate whether they will accord life to their prisoners, or have them put to death. When there is some dead person to be raised up, that is to say, when some one of their warriors has been killed, and they deem it desirable to replace him in his cabin, they grant to this cabin one of the prisoners, who holds the place of the dead, and this is what they call raising the dead.

When the prisoner is condemned to death, they at once plant in the earth a great stake to which they attach him by the two hands; they make him chant the death-song, and all the savages having seated themselves around the stake, they light a few paces off a great fire, in which they bring to a red heat hatchets, gun-barrels, and other articles of iron. Then they come one after another and apply them all red to different parts of his body. Some make gashes upon the body with their knives; others carve a morsel of the flesh already roasted, and eat it in his presence. Some are seen, who fill his wounds with powder, and rub it all over his body, after which they set fire to it. In fine each one torments him according to his own caprice, and that during four or five hours, sometimes even during two or three days. The more sharp and piercing the cries which these torments force him to utter, the more agreeable and amusing the spectacle to these

barbarians. It is the Iroquois who are the inventors of this terrific kind of death, and it is only by right of retaliation that the Illinois in their turn treat their Iroquois prisoners with an equal cruelty.

That which we understand by the word christianity is known among all the savages only under the name of prayer. Thus when I shall say to you in what is to come in this letter that such a savage nation has embraced prayer (*la prière*), that is to say that it has become Christian, or that it is preparing to be Christian. There would be much less difficulty in converting the Illinois, if prayer allowed them polygamy. They admit that prayer is good, and are delighted that it should be taught to their women and children; but when one talks about it to themselves, one finds how hard it is to control their natural inconstancy and bring them to the resolution of having only one wife and having her always.

At the hour of assembling for prayer, morning and evening, all repair to the chapel. There are not wanting those even among the greatest jugglers, that is the greatest enemies of religion, who send their children to be instructed and baptized. This is the greatest success gained at first among these savages, and the result respecting which one feels the most assured. For in the great number of children baptized, not a year is passed in which many do not die before coming to the use of reason; and among the adults the greater part are so fervent and affectionate in prayer that they would suffer the most cruel death rather than abandon it.

It is a happiness for the Illinois their being at so great a distance from Quebec, because brandy cannot be brought to them as to others. This drink is among the savages the greatest obstacle to christianity and the source of a vast number of the most monstrous crimes. It is known that they never buy it but to plunge themselves into the most furious drunkenness. The disorders and horrible deaths witnessed every day ought, indeed, to overcome the motive of gain to be realized by traffic in a liquor so fatal.

I had been with the Illinois for two years when I was recalled

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to consecrate the remainder of my days with the Abnaki nation. It was the first mission to which I had been destined on my arrival in Canada, and to all appearance it is in this mission that I shall end my life. It was necessary, therefore, to repair to Quebec in order to proceed from there to rejoin my dear savages. I have already told you of the tediousness and difficulties of this voyage. So I will only speak of one adventure, very comforting, which happened to me at forty leagues from Quebec.

I found myself in a kind of a village, where were twenty-five French houses, and a curate who had them in charge. Near the village one could see a cabin of savages, where was found a girl aged sixteen years, whom a sickness of several years had at last brought to the extremity of weakness. The curate, who did not understand the language of these savages, begged me to go and confess the sick girl, and conducted me himself to the cabin. In the interview which I had with this young person upon the truths of religion, I learned that she had been very well instructed by one of our missionaries, but had not yet received baptism. After having passed two days in making of her all the inquiries suited to assure myself of her preparation:—"Do not refuse me, I beg of you," she said to me, "the grace of baptism, for which I ask you. You know what oppression of the chest I suffer, and that there remains to me a very short time to live; what a misfortune it would be to me, and what reproaches would you not have to make to yourself, if I should come to my death without receiving this grace!" I answered that she should prepare to receive it on the morrow, and took my leave. The joy which my reply gave her wrought in her so sudden a change, that she was in condition to come in the early morning to the chapel. I was greatly surprised at her arrival, and immediately I administered baptism to her with becoming solemnity; after which she returned to her cabin, where she ceased not to thank the divine mercy for so great a benefit, and to sigh for the happy moment which was to unite her with God for all eternity. Her prayers were heard and I had the happiness of being present at her death. What an interposition of Providence for this poor girl, and what consolation for me to have been the instrument which God was pleased to make use of for giving her a place in heaven.

You do not require of me, my dear brother, to go into the detail of all that has happened to me for the many years that I have been in this mission. My occupations are always the same, and I should expose myself to tiresome repetitions. I will content myself with telling you of certain facts which seem to me to be most deserving of your attention. I can assure you, in general, that you would be at some trouble to restrain your tears should you find yourself in my church with our savages assembled, and should you be witness of the piety with which they recite their prayers, and chant the divine offices, and participate in the sacraments of penance and the eucharist. When they have been illuminated by the lights of the faith, and have sincerely embraced it, they are no longer the same men, and most of them preserve the innocence which they have received at baptism. It is this which fills me with the sweetest joy when I hear their confessions, which are frequent; whatever the interrogations I make to them, often I am scarcely able to find matter for absolving them.

My occupations with them are continual. As they do not look for help but from their missionary, as they have entire confidence in him, it is not enough for me to discharge the spiritual functions of my ministry for the sanctification of their souls; I must also enter into their temporal affairs, that I may be always ready to comfort them when they come to consult me, to decide their little differences, to take care of them when they are sick — bleed them, give them medicines, etc. My days are sometimes so filled that I am obliged to shut myself up in order to find the time of leisure for prayer and reciting my office.

The zeal with which God has filled my heart for my savages was forcibly alarmed in the year 1697, on my learning that a nation of the savage *Amalingans* was coming to establish itself a day's journey from my village. I had ground to fear that the juggleries of their medicine-men, that is to say, the sacrifices which they make to their demon, and the disorders which are the ordinary sequel, might have an influence upon some of my young neophytes. But, thanks to the divine mercy, my fears were soon dissipated after the manner which I will set forth to you.

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One of our chieftains, celebrated in this region for his valor having been killed by the English, from whom we are not very far removed, the *Amalingans*, deputed several of their nation to our village, to wipe away the tears of this illustrious man's relatives that is to say, as I have already explained to you, to visit them, make them presents, and to testify by their dances the part they took in their affliction. They arrived on the eve of Corpus-Christi day, I was then occupied in hearing the confessions of my savages, which lasted all that day, the night following and the morrow till midday, when the procession of the most holy sacrament began. It was conducted with a great deal of order and piety, and although in the midst of these forests, with more pomp and magnificence than you can well imagine. This spectacle which was new to the *Amalingans*, touched their hearts and struck them with admiration. I believed it my duty to profit by these favorable dispositions in which they were, and after having called them together I delivered to them in the style of savage oratory the following discourse : —

“It is a long time, my children, that I have desired to see you : now that I have this happiness my heart is almost ready to break. Think on the joy which a father has, who tenderly loves his children, when he sees them again after a long absence, in the course of which they have run the greatest risks, and you will conceive a part of my joy ; for although you do not yet pray, I do not cease to regard you as my children, and to have a father's tenderness for you, because you are the children of the Great Spirit, who has given being to you as well as to those who pray, who has made heaven for you as well as for them, who thinks of you just as he thinks of them and of me, that all may come to the enjoyment of eternal happiness. What gives me pain, and lessens the joy which I have at seeing you, is the reflection which even now I cannot avoid, that one day I shall be separated from a part of my children, whose lot will be eternally unhappy, because they do not pray ; while others who do pray will be in the joy which shall never end.

“When I think of this terrible separation, can I have a heart at rest? The happiness of some does not give me so much joy as the

unhappiness of others gives me grief. If you have unsurmountable hindrances to prayer, and if remaining in the state in which you are, I could make an entrance for you into heaven, I would spare no pains to procure this happiness for you. I would push you into it, I would make you all enter, so much do I love you, so much do I desire that you may be happy; but it is this which is not possible. It is necessary to pray, it is necessary to be baptized, to be able to enter into this place of delight."

After this preamble I explained to them at great length the principal articles of the : : : and I continued thus : —

"All the words which I have just explained to you, are not the words of man; they are the words of the Great Spirit. They are not written like the words of men upon a collar, by means of which a man makes out to say all that he wills; but they are written in the book of the Great Spirit, to which nothing false can have access."

To make you understand this manner of speaking of the Savages, I must remark, my dear brother, that the custom of these people, when they write to any nation, is to send a collar, or a large girdle, upon which they make various figures with bits of porcelain of different colors. One instructs the bearer of the collar by saying to him :—See now, this is what the collar says to such a nation or to such a person, and he is made to depart. Our savages would be at much trouble to comprehend what is said to them and would pay but little attention to it, if one were not to accommodate one's self to their way of thinking and of expressing themselves. I went on thus :

"Courage, my children, listen to the voice of the Great Spirit, who speaks to you by my mouth. He loves you; and his love for you is so great, that he has given his life to procure life eternal for you. Alas! It may be he has permitted the death of one of our chieftains only that he may draw you into the place of prayer, and make you hear his voice. Consider that you are not immortal. A day will come when in like manner they will wipe away the tears for your death. What will it avail you to have been great chieftains in this life, if after your death you are cast into eternal flames? He whom you come to mourn with us has felici-

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tated himself a thousand times upon having heard the voice of the Great Spirit, and having been faithful in prayer. Pray like him, and you shall live eternally. Courage, my children, do not separate us, let not some go to one side, and others to the other. Let us all go into heaven, it is our fatherland, it is what the one Master of life exhorts you to, of whom I am only an interpreter. Think seriously of it."

As soon as I had finished speaking, they conferred together for some time, then their spokesman (*orateur*) made me this reply on their behalf:—"My father, I am delighted with listening to you, your voice has penetrated even to my heart, but my heart is still shut up and I cannot open it at present, to let you know what it is or to which side it will turn. I must wait for several chieftains and other considerable people of our nation, who will arrive the coming autumn. It is then that I will open my heart to you. Behold, my dear father, here is all that I have to say to you at present."

"My heart is content," I replied to them, I am glad indeed that my word has awakened your interest and that you ask for time to think about it; you will be the firmer in your attachment to prayer, when once you shall have embraced it. Meanwhile I shall not cease to address my prayers to the Great Spirit, and to beg of him that he will look upon you with the eyes of his merey, and that he will strengthen your thoughts that they may turn to the side of prayer." After which I left their assembly, and they returned to their village.

When autumn arrived I learned that one of our savages was about to visit the Amalingans in quest of corn for planting their grounds. I had them come to me, and charged them to say on my part that I was impatient to see my children again, that I always had them present to my spirit, and that I prayed them to keep in mind the word they had given me. The savage faithfully fulfilled his commission. Here is the response which the Amalingans made to him:—

"We are much indebted to our father for continually thinking of us. On our side we have well considered what he has said to us. We cannot forget his words so long as we have a heart, for

they have been so deeply engraven there that nothing can efface them. We are convinced that he loves us, we are willing to listen to him, and obey him in what he desires of us. We accept the prayer which he offers us, and we see in it nothing but what is good and praiseworthy; we are all resolved to embrace it, and we should ere now have gone to find our father in his village, if there had been food enough for our subsistence during the time he might devote to our instruction. But how could we find it there? We know that hunger has been in our father's cabin, and it is this which doubly afflicts us, that our father suffers hunger, and that we cannot go and see him, that we may put ourselves under his instruction. If our father could come and pass some time here, he might live and instruct us. This is what you shall say to our father."

This response of the Amalingans was brought to me at a favorable juncture. The greater part of the savages had been absent for several days in search of something to sustain us in life till the harvest of Indian corn. Their absence gave me leisure to visit the Amalingans, and on the morrow I embarked in a canoe on my way to their village. I had not more than a league to traverse in order to reach it, when they perceived me; and at once they saluted me with continual discharges of guns, which did not cease till my landing from the canoe. This honor which they paid me gave me instant assurance of their present dispositions. I did not lose time, and immediately on my arrival, I had a cross planted, and those who accompanied me raised at the shortest notice a chapel which they made of bark, just as they make their cabins, and there they arranged an altar. While they were about this work, I visited all the cabins of the Amalingans, to prepare them for the instructions which I was going to give them. After I began, they were very constant in their attendance to hear them. I got them together three times a day in the chapel; namely, in the morning after my mass, at mid-day, and in the evening after prayer. The rest of the day I went about through the cabins, where I still gave instructions of a special appropriateness.

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were sufficiently instructed, I appointed the day on which they should come and receive their regeneration (*se faire régénérer*) in the waters of holy baptism. The first who came to the chapel were the chieftain, the orator, three of the most considerable men of the nation, with two women. Directly after their baptism two other bands, each of twenty savages, succeeded them, who received the same grace. In fine, all the others continued to come that day and the morrow.

You may be sure, my dear brother, that whatever toils a missionary undergoes, he is abundantly compensated for his fatigues by the sweet consolation which he feels at having led a whole nation of savages to enter into the way of salvation. I made my arrangements to leave them and return to my own village, when a messenger came to say to me on their part, that they were all together in one place and begged me to be present in their assembly. As soon as I appeared in the midst of them, the orator addressing his speech to me in the name of all the others, "Our father," said he, "we have not words to testify to you the unspeakable joy which we all feel at having received baptism. It seems to us now that we have another heart; all the trouble we experienced is entirely gone, our thoughts are no more wavering, the baptism has given us inward strength, and we are firmly resolved to honor it as long as we live. This is what we say to you before you leave us." I replied in a short address, in which I exhorted them to persevere in the singular grace which they had received, and to do nothing unworthy of the quality of children of God with which they had been honored in holy baptism. As they were getting ready to depart for the sea, I added that on their return we would settle which would be the best plan, whether that we should go and live with them or that they should come and form one and the same village with us.

The village where I live is called *Nanrantsouack*, and is located in a region which is between Aeadia and New England. This mission is about eighty leagues from *Pentagouet*, and a hundred leagues is reckoned as the distance from *Pentagouet* to Port Royal. The river of my mission is the largest of all those which water the lands of the savages. It should be marked upon the

map under the name of *Kinibeki*, which is what has led some Frenchmen to give to these savages the name of *Kinibals*. This river reaches the sea at *Sankderank*, which is but five or six leagues from *Pemquit*. After having ascended forty leagues from *Sankderank*, one arrives at my village, which is upon the height of a point of land. We are not at the distance of more than two days' journey at most from the habitations of the English. It requires more than fifteen days to reach Quebec, and the journey is very painful and very difficult. It would be natural that our savages should conduct their trade with the English, and there are no advantages that the English have not pressed upon them to attract and gain their friendship. But all these efforts have been fruitless, and nothing has availed to detach them from the alliance of the French. The sole bond which has so closely united them to us is their firm attachment to the Catholic faith. They are convinced that if they should give themselves over to the English, they would soon find themselves without a missionary, without sacrifice, without sacrament, and almost without any exercise of religion, and that little by little they would be plunged again into their original unbelief. This firmness of our savages has been put to all sorts of trial on the part of these formidable neighbors without their ever having been able to obtain any concession.

At the time that war was on the point of being kindled between the powers of Europe, the English governor recently arrived in Boston, asked of our savages an interview by the sea, on an island which he designated. They consented, and begged me to accompany them, that they might consult me respecting the crafty propositions which might be made, in order to make sure that their answers should involve nothing contrary either to religion or to the claims of the king's service. I accompanied them, and it was my intention simply to confine myself to their quarters, for the purpose of aiding them with my counsels, without appearing before the governor. As we were nearing the island, to the number of more than two hundred canoes, the English saluted us by a discharge of all the cannon of their vessels, and the savages replied to this salute by a corresponding dis-

charge of all their guns. Then the governor appearing upon the island the savages landed there with precipitation, and thus I found myself where I did not wish to be, and where the Governor did not wish that I should be. When he perceived me, he came several steps towards me, and after the ordinary compliments he returned to the midst of his people, and I to my savages.

"It is by order of our queen," he said to them, "that I come to see you. She desires that we live in peace. If any Englishman should be imprudent enough to do you wrong, do not think of avenging yourselves, but address your complaint immediately to me, and I will render you prompt justice. If it should happen that we should be at war with the French, remain neutral, and do not involve yourselves in our differences. The French are as strong as we are, so let us together settle our own quarrels. We will furnish you with all the articles you need; we will take your furs, and we will give you our merchandise at a moderate price." My presenee interfered with his saying all that he intended, for it was not without design that he had brought a minister with him.

When he had ceased speaking, the savages retired to deliberate together upon the response they had to make. During that time the governor taking me aside, said, "I entreat you, sir, not to move your Indians to make war upon us." I replied to him that my religion and my character of priest engaged me to give them only counsels of peace.

I was going on to speak still, when I saw myself all at once surrounded by a score of young warriors, who were afraid the governor was intending to have me carried away as a prisoner. Meantime the savages came forward and one of them replied to the governor as follows: "Great Chieftain, you tell us not to join ourselves to the Frenchman, supposing that you declare war against him. Know that the Frenchman is my brother; we have the same prayer, he and I, and we are in one cabin with two fires, he at one fire and I at the other. If I see you enter the cabin on the side of that fire where my brother, the Frenchman, is seated, I observe you from my mat where I am seated at the other fire. If in watching you I become aware that you carry a hatchet, I should have the thought, what does the Englishman mean to do

with that hatchet? Then I rise upon my mat to consider what he will do. If he raises the hatchet to strike my brother, the Frenchman, I take mine, and I run to the Englishman to strike him. Is it possible that I could see my brother struck in my cabin, and remain quiet upon my mat? No, no, I love my brother too much not to defend him. So I say to you, Great Chieftain, do nothing to my brother, and I will do nothing to you; remain quiet on your mat, and I will remain at rest upon mine."

Thus ended this conference. A little while after, some of our savages arrived from Quebec, and announced that a French vessel had brought the news that war had broken out between France and England. Thereupon our savages, after having deliberated according to their custom, ordered the young men to kill the dogs for making the feast of war, and so finding out those who were willing to engage. The feast took place, they raised up the boiler, they danced, and there were found two hundred and fifty warriors. After the feast they set apart a day for coming to me and confessing. I exhorted them to be as much attached to their religion as they were in the village, to observe well the laws of war, not to practice any cruelty, not to kill any one except in the heat of the combat, to accord humane treatment to those who gave themselves up as prisoners, etc.

The way these people make war causes a handful of their warriors to be an object of more dread than would be a corps of two or three thousand European soldiers. After they are entered into the hostile country they divide themselves into different parties, one of thirty warriors, another of forty, etc. They say to some, "to you is given this hamlet to eat" (it is their expression) — to others, "to you is given this village," etc. Then the signal is given to strike all together, and at the same time in different regions. Our two hundred and fifty warriors distributed themselves over more than twenty leagues of country, where there were villages and hamlets and houses. On a given day they fell all together upon the enemy in the early morning; in a single day they made a clean sweep of English possessions, they killed more than two hundred, made a hundred and fifty prisoners, and on their side

had only a few warriors wounded very slightly. They returned from this expedition to the village, having each two canoes loaded with the booty they had taken.

So long as the war lasted they carried desolation into all the lands pertaining to the English, they ravaged their villages, their forts, their farms, they drove away an immense number of cattle and made more than six hundred prisoners. Hence these gentlemen, persuaded with reason that in keeping my savages in their attachment to the Catholic faith I was drawing closer and closer the bonds which united them to the French, have had recourse to all sorts of shifts and artifices for detaching them from me. There are no offers or promises that they have not held out, if they would deliver me into their hands or at least send me back to Quebec and take in my place one of their ministers. They have made several attempts to surprise and capture me; they have gone so far even as to promise a thousand pounds sterling to the one who should bring them my head. You are well assured, my dear brother, that these menaces have no power to intimidate me or to abate my zeal; — too happy if I should become the victim of them, and if God shall count me worthy to be loaded with chains and to shed my blood for the salvation of my dear savages.

At the first news which came of the peace made in Europe, the governor of Boston sent word to our savages that if they would come together in a place which he pointed out to them, he would confer with them on the present posture of affairs. All the savages repaired to the place indicated, and the governor spoke to them thus: —

“Men of *Naranhous*, I inform you that peace is made between the king of France and our queen, and that by the treaty of peace the king of France cedes to our queen Plaisance and Portrail, with all the lands adjacent. So, if you are willing, we shall live in peace, you and I; we were in peace formerly, but the suggestions of the French have caused you to break it, and it is to please them that you have come to kill us. Let us forget all these wretched affairs, and cast them into the sea, that they may appear no more, and that we may be good friends.”

“It is well,” replied the orator in the name of the savages, “that the kings should be in peace, I am very glad of it, and I do not find it painful either to make peace with you. It is not I that am striking you these twelve years past, it is the Frenchman who has availed himself of my arm to strike you. We were in peace, it is true, I had even thrown my hatchet I know not where, and as I was at rest upon my mat thinking of nothing, the young men brought me a word which the governor of Canada sent me, by which he said to me: ‘My son, the Englishman has struck me, help me to get revenge for it; take the hatchet, and strike the Englishman.’ I who have always listened to the word of the French governor, I search for my hatchet, I find it at last all rusty, I put it in order, I hang it in my girdle to come and strike you. Now the Frenchman tells me to lay it down; I throw it very far, that no one may see any more the blood with which it is reddened. So, let us live in peace, I agree to it.

“But you say that the Frenchman has given you Plaisance and Portrail which are in my neighborhood, with all the lands adjacent: he shall give you all that he will; for me I have my land which the Great Spirit has given me for living, as long as there shall be a child of my people, he will fight for its preservation.” Thus all ended amicably; the governor made a great banquet for the savages, after which each one retired.

The happy accompaniments of peace and tranquility which they were beginning to enjoy, caused the thought to spring up in the minds of the savages of rebuilding our church, that had been ruined in a sudden irruption which the English made while they were absent from the village. As we are far away from Quebec, and much nearer Boston, they sent thither certain of the principal men of the nation to ask for some laborers, with promise of liberal pay for their work. The governor received them with special demonstrations of friendship, and made them all sorts of caresses. “I will myself reestablish your church,” said he, “and I will deal with you more favorably than did the French governor that you call your father. It should be for him to rebuild it, since it was he in a sort that occasioned its ruin in leading you to strike at me; for on my part I defend myself as I can, while as for

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him, after serving himself of you for his own defense, he abandons you. I will do better by you; for I will not only accord you laborers, I will also pay them myself, and bear all the expense of the edifice you desire to construct. But, as it is not reasonable that I, who am English, should secure the building of a church without also placing there an English minister to take care of it and to teach religion in it, I will send you one with whom you will be content, and you shall send back to Quebec the French minister who is in your village."

"Your speech astonishes me," replied the deputy of the savages, "and I wonder at the proposition which you make to me. When you came here you had seen me a long time before the French governors; neither those who preceded you nor your ministers have ever spoken to me of religion (*la prière*) or of the Great Spirit. They saw my furs, my skins of beaver and elk, and this alone is what they thought about. This is what they looked after with eagerness. I could not furnish them enough, and when I brought them a great quantity, I was their great friend and that was all. On the contrary, my canoe having gone astray one day, I lost my way. I wandered a long time in uncertainty, until at last I came to a landing near to Quebec, in a great village of the Algonquins, where the black-robos teach. Hardly had I arrived when a black-robe came to see me. I was loaded with furs, the French black-robe did not even condescend to look at them. He spoke to me at first of the Great Spirit, of paradise, of hell, of prayer, which is the only way of reaching heaven. I listened to him with pleasure, and I had so strong a relish of his talk that I stayed a long time in this village for the purpose of hearing him. In fine, religion pleased me, and I engaged him to instruct me further. I asked for baptism and I received it. Then I return to my country and I tell what has happened to me. They envy my happiness and desire to share it, they go to find the black-robe and to ask of him baptism. It is thus that the French have conducted themselves towards me. If after that you had seen me you had spoken to me of religion, I should have had the misfortune of praying as you do; for I was not capable of finding out if your prayer was good. Thus I tell you that I

hold to the prayer of the French. It suits me, and I will keep it even till the earth burns and comes to an end. Keep, therefore, your laborers, your money, and your minister—I say no more about them. I will speak to the French governor, my father, to send them to me.”

In effect, Monsieur, the governor, had no sooner learned the ruin of our church, than he sent us laborers for rebuilding it. It is of a beauty which would make it esteemed in Europe, and I have spared no effort for its decoration. You have been able to see by the details which I have given in my letter to my nephew, that in the depths of these forests and among these savage peoples divine service is performed with a great deal of propriety and dignity. It is to this that I give very great attention, not only while the savages remain in the village, but even all the time they are obliged to abide by the sea-shore, whither they go twice every year to find there something to live upon. Our savages have so far depopulated their country of beasts, that for the last ten years neither elks nor roebucks are found. Bears and beavers have become very scarce. They have hardly anything to live upon but Indian corn, beans and pumpkins. They crush the corn between two stones to reduce it to meal; then they make a porridge of it, which they sometimes season with fat or with dry fish. When the corn fails they search in their tilled fields for potatoes, or else for acorns, which they value as much as corn. After having dried them they bake them in a kettle with ashes, to take away their bitterness. For myself I eat them dry, and they take the place of bread for me.

At a certain time they betake themselves to a river not far distant, where for a month the fish come up the stream in so great a quantity that fifty thousand barrels could be filled in a day, if there were enough hands to do the work. There is a kind of large herrings very agreeable to the taste, when they are fresh. They are pressed together against each other to the thickness of a foot, and they are drawn up like the water itself. The savages dry them for eight or ten days, and they live on them during all the time that they are putting seed into their lands.

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not give it the last dressing till towards Corpus Christi day. After this they deliberate as to what part of the sea they shall resort to for seeking their sustenance till the harvest, which as a rule does not come till a little after the Assumption. After deliberation had they send to invite me to come to their assembly. As soon as I appear one of them addresses me in this manner in the name of all the others. "Our father, what I say to you is what all whom you see here say to you; you know us, you know that we are destitute of food. Hardly have we been able to give the last tillage to our fields, and we have no other resource to the time of harvest but to go and seek food at the sea-shore. It would be hard for us to leave our worship behind, therefore we hope that you will be pleased to accompany us in order that while seeking for our living we may not break off our prayers. Such and such individuals will embark you, and what you will have to carry shall be distributed among the other canoes. This is what I have to say to you." No sooner have I replied *kekikberba* (this is a savage term which means, I hear you, my children, I accord that which you request), than all cry out together *SriSrie*, which is a term of thanks. Very soon after they leave the village.

On arriving at the place where we are to pass the night, poles are planted at suitable distances from each other in the form of a chapel; they encompass it in a grand tent of tying, and it is open only in front. I always have to bring along with me a beautiful plank of cedar four feet in length with what is needed to hold it up, and it is this which serves as an altar, above which there is placed a canopy quite appropriate. I adorn the interior of the chapel with silk stuffs very beautiful; one rush mat tinted and well wrought, or else a grand bear-skin, serves as a carpet. This is brought all ready, and it only needs to lay it down as soon as the chapel is in order. At night I take my rest upon a carpet; the savages sleep in the air in the open country, if it does not rain; but if there falls a shower or snow, they cover themselves with pieces of bark which they bring with them, and which are rolled up like linen cloth. If the journey is made in winter, the snow is cleared away from the space which the chapel is to occupy, and it is set up as at other times. In it each day there is

made morning and evening prayer, and there I offer the holy sacrifice of the mass.

When the savages have come to their final halting-place, they employ the next day in raising a church, which they make secure and shapely with their pieces of bark. I bring with me my plate, and all that is needful for adorning the choir, which I have draped with beautiful Indian and silk stuffs. Divine service takes place in this church as in the village, and in effect they form a kind of village with all their cabins made of bark, which they set up in less than an hour. After the Assumption they quit the sea, and return to the village for their harvest. They have then what they can live upon very poorly till after All Saints, when they return a second time to the sea. It is at this season that they make good cheer. Besides the great fishes, the shell fish and the fruits, they find bustards, geese and all sorts of game, with which the sea is all covered in the region where they encamp, which is parted into a great number of little islands. The hunters, who leave in the morning for the chase of geese and other kinds of game, kill sometimes a score at a single discharge of a gun. Towards the Purification, or at the latest, towards Ash Wednesday, there is a return to the village, it is only the hunters, who disperse themselves for the chase of bears, elks, roebucks and beavers.

These good savages have often given me proofs of the most sincere regard for me, especially on two occasions when I found myself with them at the sea-shore, they took a lively alarm on my account. One day while they were busy in their chase, the rumor got abroad of a sudden, that a party of English had made an irruption into my quarters and had carried me off. At the very hour they assembled, and the result of their deliberation was, that they would pursue this party till they had overtaken it, and that they would take me out of its hands, though at the cost of their lives. At the same instant they sent two young savages to my quarters at a sufficiently advanced hour of the night. When they entered my cabin, I was occupied with composing the life of a saint in the savage tongue. "Ah, our father," they cried out, "how glad we are to see you!" "I likewise have much joy

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at seeing you," I replied, "but what is it that brings you here at a time so startling?" "It is to no purpose that we have come," they said to me, "we were told that the English had carried you off; we came to take note of their tracks, and our warriors will not be slow in coming to pursue them, and to attack the fort, where, if the news had been true, the English would no doubt have had you shut up." "You see, my children," I answered, "that your fears were not well founded; but the friendship which my children testify toward me fills my heart with joy, for it is a proof of their attachment to religion. To-morrow, immediately after mass, you shall go as quickly as possible to undeceive our brave warriors, and save them from all anxiety."

Another alarm equally false threw me into great embarrassment, and brought me into danger of perishing by hunger and misery. Two savages came in haste to my quarters, to warn me that they had seen the English at half a day's distance. "Our father," they said, "there is no time to lose, it is necessary for you to retire, you risk too much by remaining here; for our part we will await them, and perhaps we will make our way in advance of them. The scouts leave at this moment to watch them. But for you, you must go to the village with these men whom we bring to conduct you thither. When we know that you are in a place of safety, we shall be at ease."

I departed at the dawn of day with ten savages, who served me as guides. But after some days of travel, we found ourselves at the end of our scanty provisions. My guides killed a dog which followed them, and ate it; they were soon reduced to some sacks of sea-wolf skin (*à des sacs de loups marins*), which they likewise ate. This was something I could not taste. Sometimes I lived upon a kind of wood which was boiled, and which, when it is cooked, is as tender as radishes half cooked, excepting the heart, which is very hard and is thrown away. This wood had not a bad taste, but I found extreme difficulty in swallowing it. Sometimes also they found attached to trees some of those excrescences of wood which are white like great mushrooms; these were cooked and reduced to a kind of broth, but they were a long way from having the taste of broth. Sometimes the bark of

the green oak was dried at the fire, and then peeled, and porridge was made of it, or again they dried those leaves that grow in the clefts of rocks, and which are called rock-tripe; when these are cooked they make a porridge very black and disagreeable. Of all these I ate, for there is nothing which hunger will not devour.

With such nourishment we could only make small progress in a day. We arrived, nevertheless, at a lake which had begun to thaw, and where there was already four inches of water upon the ice. It was necessary to cross it with our snowshoes, but as these snowshoes are made with strings of hide, when they were wet, they became very heavy, and made our march much more difficult. Although one of our people went forward to examine the way, I sank suddenly to the knees, another who was walking at my side presently went down to the waist, crying out, "My father, I am a dead man." As I approached to lend him a hand, I sank down still deeper myself. In fine, it was not without much trouble that we got out of this danger, owing to the embarrassment which our snowshoes occasioned us, of which we could not deprive ourselves. Still I ran less risk of drowning than of dying of cold in the midst of this half-frozen lake.

New dangers awaited us the next day at the passage of a river, which we had to cross on floating masses of ice. Happily we succeeded in this, and at last arrived at the village. The first thing was to unearth a little Indian corn which I had left in my house, and of which I ate, hard as it was, to appease the first cravings of hunger, while those poor savages gave themselves to every sort of movements to make good cheer for me. And really the repast which they proceeded to get ready for me, although frugal, and as it might seem to you not very appetizing, was according to their ideas a veritable banquet. First, they served me a plate of soup made of Indian corn. For the second service they gave me a morsel of bear-meat with some acorns, and a cake of Indian corn cooked under embers. Finally, the third service, which formed the dessert, was an ear of Indian corn roasted before the fire, with some kernels of the same corn parched under embers. When I asked them why they had made me such good cheer,—“Ah, what, our father,” they answered,

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"there are two days that you have had nothing to eat; could we do anything less? may it please God that we shall often be able to entertain you in the same manner."

While I was dreaming of recovering myself from my fatigues, one of the savages who were encamped upon the sea-shore, and who did not know of my return to the village, caused a new alarm. Having come to my encampment, and not finding me or those who were encamped with me, he had no doubt that we had been carried off by a party of English; going on his way to carry the news to those of his quarter, he arrived at a river bank. There he took the bark of a tree, upon which with coal he drew the English around me, and one of them cutting off my head. (This is all the writing the savages have, and they communicate among themselves by these sorts of drawings as understandingly as we do by our letters). He then put this kind of letter around a stick which he planted on the bank of the river, to give news to those passing by of what had happened to me. A little while after some savages who were passing by in six canoes on their way to the village, took notice of this bark; "See there a writing," they said, "let us find out what it says." "Alas!" they cried out, as they examined it, "the English have killed those of our father's encampment (*quartier*), and as for him they have cut off his head." They instantly took out the braidings of their hair so as to leave it negligently tossed about over their shoulders, and sat down before the stick till the next day without saying a word. This ceremony with them is the mark of the greatest affliction. The next day they continued their journey to within half a league of the village, where they halted, when they sent one into the wood near by in order to see if the English had not come to burn the fort and the cabins. I was reciting my breviary as I walked along the fort and the river, when the savage arrived opposite me on the other bank. As soon as he perceived me, he cried out, "Ah, my father, how glad I am to see you. My heart was dead, and it is alive again at beholding you. We saw a writing which said that the English had cut off your head. How glad I am that it was a lie." When I proposed to send him a canoe for crossing the river, he replied, "No, it is enough that I

have seen you. I turn back now to carry the agreeable tidings to those who are waiting for me, and soon we will come and rejoin you." They came, in fact, that very day.

I trust, my very dear brother, that I have done justice to what you desired of me by the sketch (*précis*) I have now given you of the nature of this country, of the character of our savages, of my occupations, my labors, and the dangers to which I am exposed. You will judge, without doubt, that it is on the part of the English that I have most to fear. It is true that for a long time they have conspired for my destruction. But neither their ill will nor the death with which they threaten<sup>1</sup> me can ever cause me to separate myself from my long-trying flock. I commend it to your devout prayers, and am with the most tender attachment, etc.

<sup>1</sup>He was killed the year following.

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## MISSION OF FATHER RASLES.

[Concluded.]

LETTER OF THE FATHER DE LA CHASSE, SUPERIOR  
GENERAL OF THE MISSIONS OF NEW FRANCE TO  
THE FATHER . . . . OF THE SAME COMPANY.

Translated from "Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses," Paris, 1781

BY E. C. CUMMINGS.

*Read before the Maine Historical Society, at Waterville, September 9, 1892.*

AT QUEBEC, THE 29 OCTOBER, 1724.

*My Reverend Father:— The peace of our Lord:—*

In the extreme sorrow which we feel at the loss of one of our oldest missionaries, it is a sweet consolation for us that he has been the victim of his charity and of his zeal to maintain the faith in the hearts of his converts. You have already learned from their letters what has been the source of the war that has been kindled between the English and the savages: on the part of the former the desire to extend their domination;—on the part of the latter the dread of total subjugation and attachment to their religion have at first caused misunderstandings, and these at last have been followed by an open rupture.

Father Rasles, missionary to the Abnakis, had become very odious to the English. Convinced that his endeavors to fortify the savages in the faith formed the greatest obstacle to the design they cherished of seizing upon their lands, they had set a price upon his head, and more than once they had attempted to carry him off or to compass his death. At last they are come to the end of satisfying the transports of their hate and of delivering themselves from the apostolic man; but at the same time they have procured for him a glorious death, which was always the object of his desires; for we know that long since he was aspiring to sacrifice his life for his flock. I will describe in a few words the circumstances of this event.

After numerous hostile acts on one side and on the other between the two nations, a little army of English and savages, their allies, to the number of 1,100 men made an attack without warning upon the village of Naurantsouak. The dense brushwood by which the village is surrounded aided them to conceal their march; and as, moreover, it was not shut in by palisades, the savages, taken by surprise, had no notice of the enemy's approach but by the general discharge of their muskets, by which all the cabins were riddled. There were then but fifty warriors in the village. At the first noise of musketry they seized their arms in a panic-stricken way and rushed from their cabins to make head against the enemy. Their intention was not so much the rash one of sustaining the onset of so many combatants, but to favor the flight of the women and children by giving them time to gain the other side of the river not as yet occupied by the English.

Father Rasles apprised by the clamors and the tumult of the peril which menaced his disciples, went forth immediately from his house and presented himself without fear to the enemies. It was his hope either to suspend by his presence their first efforts, or at least to draw their attention upon himself and at the cost of his own life to gain the safety of his flock.

As soon as the missionary was recognized there rose a general cry, which was followed by a hail of musketry which they discharged in a shower upon him. He fell dead at the foot of a grand cross which he had planted in the midst of the village, to signify the public confession which was there made of adoring a crucified God. Seven savages who gathered around him, and who exposed their lives to preserve the life of their father, were killed at his side.

The pastor's death sent consternation into the flock. The savages took to flight and crossed the river, part at the ford and part by swimming. They had to experience all the fury of the enemy up to the moment when they escaped into the woods on the other side of the river. They found themselves there assembled to the number of a hundred and fifty. From more than two thousand shots fired upon them there were but thirty killed,

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and including women and children forty wounded. The English were not persistent in the pursuit of the fugitives. They contented themselves with pillaging and burning the village. The firing of the *cinreh* was preceded by the base profanation of the sacred vessels and of the adorable body of Jesus Christ.

The sudden retreat of the enemy allowed the Nanrantsouakians to return to their village. The next day after they visited the ruins of their cabins; while for their part the women sought for herbs and plants proper for dressing the hurts of the wounded. Their first care was to weep over the body of their holy missionary. They found him pierced with a thousand wounds, his scalp taken away, the skull broken in by blows of a hatchet, the mouth and eyes filled with mud, the bones of the legs shattered and all the members mutilated. These kinds of inhumanity, wreaked upon a body deprived of feeling and life, can hardly be attributed to any but the savage allies of the English.

After these fervent Christians had washed and kissed many times the venerable remains of their father, they interred them in the very place where the day before he had celebrated the holy sacrifice of the mass, that is to say, at the place where was the altar before the burning of the church.

It is by a death so precious that the apostolic man finished, the twenty-third of August of this year, a career of thirty-seven years passed in the painful toils of this mission. He was in the sixty-seventh year of his life. His fastings and continual fatigues had at last impaired his temperament; he dragged himself about with no little difficulty since he met with a fall about nineteen years ago, when he broke at the same instant the right thigh and the left leg. It happened that the callus having been badly formed at the place of the fracture, it was necessary to break the left leg again. During the time when it was most violently treated he bore the agonizing operation with extraordinary firmness and an admirable tranquility. Our physician [M. Sarrazin], who was present, was so astonished that he could not forbear exclaiming to him: "I say, my father, let at least a few groans escape you, you have so much occasion for them."

Father Rasles joined to the talents which make an excellent

missionary the virtues which the gospel ministry demands in order to its successful exercise among our savages. He was of robust health, and, with the exception of the accident just mentioned, I know not that he ever had the least indisposition. We were surprised at his facility and at his application to learning the different savage tongues. There was no one of them on this continent of which he did not have some tincture. Besides the Abnaki language which he had spoken longest, he knew also the Huron, the Otaouaise and the Illinois, and he employed them with success in the different missions where they are in use. From the moment of his arrival in Canada he has never been seen to deny his character; he was always firm and courageous, hard to himself, tender and compassionate with regard to others.

Three years ago by order of Monsieur, our governor, I made the tour of Acadia. While staying with Father Rasles I pointed out to him that in case war were declared against the savages he would run the risk of his life; that his village being only fifteen leagues from the English forts he would find himself exposed to the first irruptions; that his preservation was necessary to his flock, and that it behooved him to take measures for putting his days in surety. "My measures are taken," he replied to me with a firm tone, "God has entrusted to me this flock. I will follow his direction, too happy to offer myself for him." He often repeated the same thing to his disciples, to fortify their constancy in the faith. "We have proved only too much," they have said to me themselves, "that this dear father spoke to us out of the abundance of his heart; we have seen him face death with a tranquil and serene air, exposing himself alone to the fury of the enemy, holding back their first efforts to give us time to fly from the danger and preserve our lives."

As a price had been put upon his head and attempts had been made at various times to carry him away captive, at the last springtime the savages proposed to him to conduct him farther into the country in the direction of Quebec, where he would be in shelter from the perils with which his life was menaced. "What idea then have you of me," he replied to them with an air of indignation; "do you take me for a cowardly deserter?"

Alas! What would become of your faith if I should abandon you? Your salvation is dearer to me than life."

He was indefatigable in the exercise of his zeal; unceasingly occupied in exhorting the savages to virtue, his one thought was to make them fervent Christians. His manner of preaching, vehement and pathetic, made a lively impression upon their hearts. Some families of the Wolves, recently arrived from Orange, have declared to me, the tears in their eyes, that they were indebted to him for their conversion to Christianity; and that, having received baptism of him about thirty years ago, the instructions he had given them for that time could never be effaced from their minds, so efficacious had his word been, and such profound traces had it left in the hearts of those who heard him.

He did not content himself with instructing the savages almost every day in his church, he visited them often in their cabins. His familiar talks charmed them, as he knew how to season them with a holy gaiety, which pleased the savages more than a grave and somber air. Also he had the art of persuading them to whatever was his will. He was among them as a master in the midst of his pupils.

Notwithstanding the continual occupations of his ministry he never omitted those sacred practices, which are observed in our houses. He rose and engaged in his devotions at the hour which is there assigned. He never dispensed himself from the eight days of annual retreat. He set apart to himself for this service the first days of Lent, which is the time when the Saviour entered into the desert. "If no time is fixed in the year," he said to me one day, "for these holy exercises, occupations succeed one another, and after many delays one runs the risk of never finding the leisure to acquit himself of them."

Religious poverty was strikingly apparent in his whole person, in his furniture, in his manner of living, in his dress. He forbade himself the use of wine in the spirit of mortification, even when he found himself with the French. A porridge made of Indian corn meal was his ordinary nourishment. During certain winters, when at times the savages suffered a destitution of everything, he saw himself reduced to living upon acorns. Far from complain-

ing at such times, he never appeared more content. The three last years of his life when war hindered the savages from freely following the chase as well as from putting seed into their grounds, the destitution became extreme and the missionary found himself in a frightful scarcity. Care was taken to send him from Quebec the provisions necessary to his subsistence. "I am ashamed," he wrote to me, "of the care you take of me; a missionary born for suffering ought not to be so well treated."

He would not suffer anyone to lend a hand for his assistance in the most common needs and always served himself. It was he who cultivated his garden, who prepared his wood for heating his cabin and his porridge, who repaired his torn garments, seeking by the spirit of poverty to make them last the longest time possible. The cassock which he wore when he was killed appeared to those who despoiled him so worn out and in so poor a condition that they disdained to appropriate it as they had at first intended. They threw it back over his body and it was sent to us at Quebec.

As much as he was given to a hard treatment of himself, so much was he compassionate toward others. He had nothing merely to himself and all that he received he distributed as soon as the need arose to his poor disciples. On their part also they gave at his death demonstrations of sorrow more lively than if they had lost their nearest relatives.

He took an extraordinary care to embellish his church, convinced that this outward attire, which strikes the senses, animates the devotion of barbarous people and inspires them with a deeper veneration for our holy mysteries. As he knew a little of painting and used it with a good degree of correctness, the church was decorated with a number of works at which he himself had labored.

You judge well, my Reverend Father, that these virtues of which New France has been a witness for many years, have gained for him the respect and affection of the French and of the savages.

Moreover he is universally regretted. No one doubts that he has been sacrificed through hate of his ministry and of his zeal

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to establish the true faith in the heart of the savages. This is the idea of him which M. de Bellemont, Superior of the Seminary of Saint Sulpice in Montreal had. Having asked for him the customary prayers for the dead, on the ground of the communion in prayers which is among us, he replied to me, availing himself of the words so well known of St. Augustine, that it was doing scanty honor to a martyr to pray for him, *Injuriam facit martyri qui orat pro eo.*

Let it please the Lord that his blood shed for a cause so just may fertilize these lands of unbelief so often sprinkled with the blood of laborers in the gospel who have preceded us; may it make them fruitful in fervent Christians, and animate the zeal of apostolic men to come out and gather here an abundant harvest, which so many people still wrapped in the shadow of death shall present to them.

Still as it pertains only to the Church to declare the saints, I recommend him to your holy sacrifices and to those of all our fathers. I hope you will not forget him who is with much respect, etc.

