

The Huron Relation of 1635

by **Father Jean de Brebeuf** blackrobe and martyr

Translated by A.J. MACDOUGALL, S.J. and J.S. McGIVERN, S.J.

Reverend Father, I write this to give you an account of our trip to the land of the Hurons. It was indeed tiring, and cost us a great deal more than my first trip. But it has been filled with blessings and God willing will be followed with many more.

Difficulties

Last year, 1634, when we reached Three Rivers, the now established trading post, we were beset with some difficulties and perplexities. In the first place, there were only 11 Huron canoes to accommodate 10 extra of us, who were planning to go with them to their home. And we were in serious doubt about any other (Huron) coming down this year because of the great defeat suffered last spring in battle with the Iroquois (called Sonontterrhonons) and the fear they had of encountering a new force. This made us hesitate whether to take advantage of the present opportunities or wait for a better one.

Finally after full deliberation, we decided to try our luck, judging it to be vitally important to set foot in the country in order to open the door now so firmly closed to the faith. It was easier to make this resolution than to carry it out. Indeed, it would have been impossible without the aid, the influence, and the kindness of M. du Plessis Bochard, Commander of the Fleet.

Immediately after his arrival on the 5th of July, 1634, he held a council with the Bissiriniens before whom he put a plan he had formed of sending some men with them and of attaching us to the Hurons. Their objections were many and the most vehement against us was one of the Chiefs of the Island, named "The Partridge." However, reasoning and gifts won them over.

On the following morning the Assembly met again at the behest of M. du Plessis Bochard. Both the Bissiriniens and the Hurons were there. The same plan was presented to them, but, out of consideration for one another, they all agreed not to take any Frenchmen. For the moment no argument could influence them. And so, by this action, our plans seemed to come to naught. However, when the Assembly broke up, one of the Attiguenongha, drawing me aside, asked me to go and see him in his hut. There he indicated to me that he and his companion would take three of us. I answered that we could not go unless five went (that is, three of us and two of our men).

Thereupon, the Arendarhonons became enthusiastic about taking us along and found room for six. So we resolved to set out, but we had to leave behind two little boys we wanted to take with us. We began to parcel out our baggage, making presents to each Indian in order to encourage them.

The following day, the 7th of the month, M. du Plessis Bochard was still more generous in gifts, insisting on the sole condition that they should take us along. He entertained them all together with a feast of "three big kettles". But disease which last year spread through all these tribes

causing great havoc laid hold on several of our Indians and filled the rest of us with fear. This threw us into much confusion and put us to great trouble, as we had to set off immediately.

Our six canoes, now reduced to three, forced our two Fathers and myself to disembark. I had to find new men to unload our small amount of baggage and I had to reconsider who should go and who remain. I also had to choose among our packages those who could take with us and arrange for the rest. All this in less than half an hour when we should have needed several full days. Nonetheless, our departure, as we realized, was a stroke struck for Heaven. We thought it necessary to put forth every effort to resist the opposition of the common enemy of man's salvation, who without a doubt had meddled in this matter.

I therefore did everything I could. We doubled our presents. We reduced the amount of our baggage and took only what was needed for Mass, or what was absolutely necessary for life. M. du Plessis exercised his authority. M. Olive and M. Coullart assisted with their hands. All Frenchmen encourages us with their good will. And yet, there were times when I was completely baffled and hopeless, until I turned in a very special way to Our Lord Jesus, for Whose Glory alone we were undertaking this arduous journey, and until I made a special vow to the glorious St. Joseph, the new Patron of the Hurons. then I saw that everything became quiet and our Indians so satisfied that those who took Father Daniel had already placed him in their canoe and appeared about to depart without having received the ordinary reward. But he, seeing they had no cloaks as the others had, stepped out of the canoe, told me about it, and I had some given to them.

Finally, having briefly thanked M. du Plessis, and placing in his care the departure of the rest of our group, if an opportunity occurred, and having said good-bye to him and all the other Frenchmen, I set out with Father Anthony Daniel and one of our men. The other two were to come with the Algonquins. M. du Plessis honoured our departure with several volleys in order to make us still more acceptable to our Indians. It was the 7th of July.

A weary journey

Father Ambrose Davost set out a week later with two more of our men. the others followed a week later to take their share in the fatigues of a very wearisome journey., Wearisome, not only on account of its length, and of the poor food along the way, but also because of the detours which have to be made in coming here from Quebec by way of the Bissiriniens and the Little Nation. I understand that this makes a journey of more than 300 leagues. The trip it is true is shorter by way of the St. Louis Rapids and the Lake of the Iroquois. But the fear of enemies and the few advantages to be met with made that route unusable. Of two of the usual difficulties, the first is that of the rapids and portages. Your Reverence has already seen enough of the rapids near Quebec to know what they are like. All rivers in this country are filled with them and this is particularly true of the St. Lawrence River when one gets beyond the River of the Prairies. From that point onwards it has no smooth bed but is broken up in several places, rolling and leaping fearfully as an impetuous torrent. In places it can even drop suddenly many feet. As we made our way, I remembered the cataracts of the Nile as described by historians. When one approaches these falls or rushing rapids, one needs must land to carry all the baggage, and even canoes, on one's shoulders through woods and over high and troublesome rocks. Great effort must be put in

this for there are portages of one, two, and three leagues, to which must be added the necessity for making several trips, no matter how few packages one has.

In some places, though the water is fast flowing, the approaches are somewhat easier and the Indians get into the water, hauling their canoes and guiding them by hand, with extreme difficulty and danger. Sometimes the Indian is up to his neck, so that he is forced to let go his hold and to save himself the best he can from the rush of the water, which now seizes and carries off the canoe. This happened to one of the Frenchmen alone in his canoe, all the Indians having abandoned it to the mercy of the torrent. His skill and strength saved both his life and the canoe, with all that was in it. I kept count of the number of portages and I find that we carry things 35 times and drag the canoes at least 50. At times I took a hand at helping my Indians, but the bed of the river is made up of stones so sharp that being barefooted I could not walk long.

Poor food, poor shelter

Another usual difficulty is in regard to food. It is not infrequent that we have to fast if one misses the caches that were made when coming down. And when one has found them, one's appetite is still not satisfied even after sharing them. The ordinary meal is only a little Indian corn, crushed rather crudely between two stones, or sometimes left whole, and then taken with fresh water. This is not very appetizing. Now and again there is fish, but only by chance, except when one meets another tribe where one can buy it.

Added to these difficulties one must sleep on the bare earth or some hard rock, for failure to find ten or twelve square feet to erect even the poorest of shelters. To add to this, one must endure the continual stench of extremely tired men. There is also the trudging through water, mud, in darkness, and the clutter of the forest where the stings of countless swarms of mosquitoes and gnats are a constant plague.

I say naught of the long, troublesome silence forced on one. In this I have in mind those, who voyaging up for the first time, have nobody of their own tongue to talk to and do not know the Indian language.

Unusual trials

These difficulties, since they are common ones, we shared with all those coming here. But, in our own trip, some experiences were quite unusual. First we had to paddle continuously just as much as the Indians themselves; so much so that I had no time to recite my breviary, except when I lay down, time when I needed more sleep than work. The other difficulty was that we had to carry our baggage over the portages, as hard for us as it was new, and even more difficult for the others than it was for me, who already had experienced a little of this weariness. I had to make at least four trips at each portage. The others had just as many. I had already been up to the Hurons once before but I had not paddled nor carried any burdens. Nor had other Religious who made the same journey. This time however, all of us had to begin, through these experiences to carry the Cross which our Lord offers for His honour and the salvation of these poor people. Indeed, I was at times so weary that my body could do no more. But at the same time my soul was filled with a deep content, since I was suffering for God. Unless one has experienced this there can be no knowledge of it.

Others suffer

All did not escape so easily. Father Davost, among others, was very badly dealt with. Of his scanty belongings much was stolen and he was forced to abandon a small steel mill, almost all our books, some linen and most of the paper carried of which we had a real need. He was left behind at the Island, among the Algonquins, where he truly suffered. When he reached the Huron country he was so worn out and dishearted that for a long time he did not recover from it.

Father Daniel was also deserted and forced to change canoes. So was Peter, one of our men. Little Martin was most roughly handled and finally left behind among the Bissiriniens where he stayed so long that he was some two months coming up and arrived in the country of the Hurons on September 19th. Baron was robbed by his Indians on the very day of his arrival in this area. He would have lost much more if they had not forced him, from fear of his weapons, to return part of what they had taken. In short, all the French suffered greatly, incurred great losses in proportion to their few possessions, and ran considerable risks. Whoever expects to come must face these dangers, and even more, death itself, present before his eyes at every moment. As for myself, not being able to swim, I have been very close to it; on leaving the Bissiriniens, while descending some rapids, we would have fallen from a great height had not the Indians, promptly and skillfully, jumped into the water in order to turn aside the canoe which was being carried away by the current. Undoubtedly, others could tell as much and more, considering the great number of such incidents.

Superstition and lies

Three other difficulties gave me particular trouble. The first was the way my men, from the very start, kept hounding me to hide somewhere a chest placed in our canoe by one of the French. The second was an anxiety for those we had left behind. The third was that the Algonquins, through whose territory we were passing, tried to intimidate us, saying the Hurons would kill us as they had done to Brule. They did this, with all the apparent good will, because they wanted us to remain with them.

Since coming here, I learned that the master of the canoe proposed that I be left behind somewhere with my few possessions, but this suggestion was immediately rejected, so much so that no sign of this appeared to me. All this, thank God, did not worry me much. I told them that I would carry this chest, although they had been paid to carry it. For the rest, I resigned myself to God's Will, ready to die for the honour of His Son, Our Lord, and for the salvation of these poor people.

I do not know when they spoke of abandoning me, but my Indians showed me so much affection and spoke so well of us to others, that they aroused in all the Hurons we met a desire to take at least one of our men. This makes me doubt whether what they said about the master of my canoe is true.

Daniel and Baron

For those who had set out with Father Daniel and Baron wished to leave them behind at the Island (Allumette), but the master of the canoe carrying Father Daniel seeing him unhappy about that had him get into his canoe. He took him along until they met the chief of La Rochelle

(Ossossane) who knew the Father from the previous year, for he had been prepared to carry him up. Now this chief willingly took Father into his own canoe and also his two bundles. This pleased both the Father and the Indians for he would still have had great difficulties in another, a rather wretched canoe wherein were three sick men whose village was distant twelve leagues from our own. This chief lived in a village where we planned to settle and quite near where we are. Besides his canoe was in good shape and manned by six strong Indian all in good health and of pleasant disposition. This happy exchange took place on the morning of the day before St. Ignatius day. The previous day his canoe had been twice overturned.

As for Baron, had it not been for the chief of the Island who forced the Indians to return his baggage to their canoes he would have remained there. As it was, they were not as harsh towards him as on a previous occasion some Indians were to one of our Frenchmen whom they were bringing back from Huronia to Quebec.

This young man by the name of Lamarche would have died in the forest if we had not noticed he was missing and sent in search of him. They had to retrace their steps over a league.

Some uncertainties

Sometimes it needs only a word, perhaps a dream, or fit of imagination or the least hint of inconvenience to make them ill-treat or even set ashore, and indeed, I dare say, to murder a man - as happened last year to an unfortunate Algonquin, abandoned at a "Rapid" by his own kinsman. And only a month ago a poor young man - also an Algonquin - having fallen into a fire and was killed near our village by his own people from fear that he would be a burden to them in their canoe. I am convinced that they killed him because this is their custom as I have been told by the Hurons. The evening before he had eaten well and generously from whatever was offered him. Further, two Algonquins assured us that they intended to brain him with a stroke or two of their axes.

Your Reverence has seen or heard of like cases during your winter trip with the Indians. In a word whoever wants to come here must be ready for many obvious perils and great fatigue.

And yet I would attribute all these extraordinary difficulties to the sickness prevalent among the Indians. For we know how much illness changes the very disposition of the most agreeable of men. I wonder at what cost French and Montagnais rid themselves of the sickness. I know well many of the Montagnais at Three River when we left were laid low and many were dying. There was scarcely a canoe that returned from the trading that escaped the sickness. It was so widespread among the Indians we knew, I wonder if even one escaped the disease. All these unfortunates were plagued during the fall especially while fishing and harvesting. Much of the harvest is still beneath the snow and many people have died. Some have still not recovered. This sickness just showed itself in attacks of fever, followed by measles or smallpox, quite different from the kind we have in France, often accompanied by temporary blindness or lessening of one's vision, and finally climaxed by intestinal flu which has carried off several and is still bringing others to the grave.

In all these trials and tribulations we owe a great deal to the loving care and paternal goodness of Our Lord, for neither on the trip nor after our arrival has even one of us been afflicted with this

sickness. And none has been hungry or lost his appetite. But since then a few of us have been slightly affected by the illness but that was only temporary. May Our Lord be forever praised for this special favour which has helped us greatly enhance our faith among these people.

Arrival in the Huron Country

I arrived in the Huron Country, the 5th day of August, Feast of Our Lady of the Snows. I had spent thirty days on the road, labouring continually, except for one day we rested in the land of the Bissiriniens. The others, with the exception of Robert le Coq and Dominic, took a great deal longer. Ordinarily the trip takes some twenty days or more. I disembarked at the landing place for the village of Toanche or Teadeouiata, where we had stayed previously. But this was accompanied by some humiliations, for Our Lord wished us to know that from our very beginning he was calling upon us to suffer here. My Indians, forgetting all that I had done for them and the help I had given in their sickness, forgetting all the fair words and promises made, set me ashore with a few church goods and a small amount of baggage. They left me completely alone without food, without shelter, heading for their own villages some seven leagues away.

The trouble was that Toanche had changed since I left and I no longer knew where it was.

The shore was no longer frequented and I could not be certain of the way. Even if I had known the way, I was too exhausted to carry all my baggage at one and the same time. Nor could I risk two trips from that place. That is why I begged my Indians to go with me as far as the village or at least to sleep on that shore for the night and to guard my effects while I went to find out where I was. But they were deaf to my pleadings and my entreaties. The only consolation they gave me was to say that someone would come looking for me. I had to be patient. They left and I fell at once upon my knees to thank God, Our Lady and St. Joseph for the favours and graces received en route. I prayed to the Guardian Angel of this country and offered myself to Our Lord with any little work of ours for the salvation of these unfortunate people, with full hope that God would not leave me alone since he had protected me and led me on with so many favours.

After realizing that this shore was deserted and I would be alone there for a long time before anyone from the village would come to find me, I hid what I had in the woods taking with me anything of value. I went off to look for the village. Happily I discovered it some three quarters of a league away, having on the way seen, with some feeling and emotion, the place where we had lived and where for three years running we had said Mass. It was now only an empty field. I also saw the site of the old village where with the exception of one hut naught remained but ruins of the others.

I also saw where poor Etienne Brule was cruelly and traitorously put to death. This made me think that someday they could deal with us much in the same way and it made me desire that at least this would be in seeking the glory of God.

"Echon"

As soon as I was spotted from the village, the cry was raised by some "Echon is back." This is the name they gave me. Everyone rushed out to greet me and welcome me - each one calling me

by name and calling "Echon - my nephew, my brother, my cousin, have you really come back to us?"

Without lingering, for night was falling, I found a place to lodge. I rested a short while, then I set out with a volunteer group of young men to gather up my meager belongings. It was an hour after dark when we returned to the village. I stayed with a man named Aonandoue, who is or at least was one of the richest among the Hurons. I did this deliberately because another of lesser means would have been inconvenienced by the large number of Frenchmen I was awaiting and whom it would be necessary to feed until we had gathered together and built our cabin.

Huron hospitality

You may dwell wherever you like, for this nation more than all others is extremely hospitable to anyone, even to a complete stranger. You may stay with them as long as you please, well treated according to the manner of the country. On leaving, you have no further obligation than a *Ho! Ho!* etc. or a hearty thanks, at least among themselves.

From Frenchmen they expect something in payment but always according to one's means. It is quite true that not all are equally hospitable, some are more, some are less. My host was outstanding in this and perhaps this is the reason God has showered upon him to this day temporal blessings and has safeguarded him among his people. For example, their village, Teandeouiata, was burned twice and each time his was the only house spared in the fire. Some say he is lucky - for myself I think it is for another reason. And so I recall a good quality in him, call it prudence or humanness, which he showed at the time of the first burning - so much jealousy was aroused against him, some wishing to destroy his cabin which the flames had spared. Immediately he hung up a large kettle, prepared an abundant feast inviting the whole village. After they were gathered together he harangued them in the following way:

"My Brothers, I am deeply distressed at the mishap that has occurred but whatever we do about it - it has happened. For my part I do not know what I have done for heaven to have alone been spared. To show my distress and my desire to share this common disaster, here are two bins of corn. (They contained at least one hundred to a hundred and twenty bushels.) From the bottom of my heart I give one to the whole village."

This act appeased them and rid them of the evil plans they were making against them. This was prudent to lose one portion in order to keep the other.

I lodged therefore with this man. With me stayed the two Fathers and one of our men. We remained with him for a month and a half until we moved to our new cabin. However these poor Indians were kindness itself to us, some inspired by their natural disposition, others out of consideration for some small gifts I had made them and out of hope for further gifts. I placed the rest of our people in another cabin to avoid imposition and inconvenience that would ensue by all of us being in the same dwelling.

That evening and the next day I passed in exchange of kindnesses, visits, greetings and words of welcome from the whole village. On the following days many from other villages who knew me

came to see me, all taking away, in exchange for their visits, some little gift. Each gift was little in itself, but all together exerted a great influence, and this is considered rather important here.

Some said to me "Echon, have you truly come back? Well done, that's right. We wished and asked insistently for you, (giving their reasons) and we were very happy when they told us you were back in Quebec and intended to come here." Others said "How glad we are, the crops will no longer fail. In your absence we suffered famine and hunger." And in truth I believe that on our arrival there were only two families in the whole village who had a store of corn - all the others sought elsewhere to buy it and this was the same situation elsewhere. Since our arrival, there has been an abundance of corn in the whole region although this spring they had to sow three times because of frost and worms.

To put it briefly, all those of our village said "If you had not returned, we would have lost our trade with the French, for the Algonquins and even the Hurons of other villages threatened us with death if we went to trade and this because of the murder of Brule. Now however, we can trade without fear."

For some two weeks I busied myself visiting the villages and gathering together with much trouble all our party, who landed here and there and who, without an inkling of the language, could not have reached us except with a great deal of difficulty. It is true that one of our men did reach us with no other address than these two words "Echon Ihonataria," my name and that of our village. I know of none who had more trouble than Father Davost and Baron, the Father from the ill-treatment meted out by his Indians, Baron from the length of the trip. He spent forty days on the way, often alone with one Indian and paddling a large, heavily laden canoe. He had to carry alone all his baggage. Three or four times he barely escaped the torrential waters. To add to all this, much of his property was stolen. Without doubt a strong back and much patience are needed. Anyone who thinks of coming here to seek ought but God will be sadly disappointed.

Why Ihonataria

Jean Nicolet who came with us as far as the "Island" endured as much hardship as the strongest of Indians. When we were at last grouped together, we made up our minds to settle here at Ihontartiria, and to erect our cabin for the following reasons:

- 1. After earnestly praying to God we considered that it was his will, because the harvest of souls is riper here than elsewhere - as much because of my acquaintance with the people here and of the kindness they showed to me before, as because they are already half instructed in the faith. As a matter of fact, we have baptized eight of them, of whom seven have in their baptismal innocence gone to heaven. The whole place is so well disposed that it is quite simply waiting for baptism. But we are delaying until they are better instructed and have given up in truth, their chief superstitions.
- 2. Apart from this village, there is only La Rochelle where we might be inclined to settle. And such has been our plan ever since last year. All the inhabitants, who ardently wanted this, invited us saying that for all practical purposes we would be in the very centre of the nation. They added other motives and reasons which pleased us well. Even on the way up, I toyed with this idea and did not abandon it until long after my arrival here. So much

so, that we left Father Daniel's baggage for quite some time at this village of La Rochelle with the chief who had welcomed him into his canoe. We intended to have the remaining baggage taken and for us to settle there. But having reflected that this spring they intended to move - which they have already done - we had no desire to erect a hut for one winter alone. Moreover, anxious though we were to have many listeners at our gatherings, in order that our work might be more fruitful - this could make us choose larger villages rather than small ones - we have thought it best, at the beginning, to keep ourselves more in the shadows, so to speak, near a little place, the people of which are already getting used to the French, than to settle in a large one where they are unaccustomed to our ways. To do otherwise would be to expose untried men, ignorant of the language, to a large number of young people, whose annoying and mocking ways would have caused no end of trouble.

And also, if we had gone elsewhere the people of this village would believe themselves to be in the bad books of the French and trade with them would be abandoned. This seemed the more likely since Le Borgne of the Island spread the rumour, last winter, that Monsieur de Champlain had no desire to remain there because of Brule's death and was demanding four heads (in return). It is quite likely that, had we not remained as guarantees of good will, quite a number fearing to be arrested, whether for what they had done or what had been done by others, would not have continued trading and, besides, these good people asserted that we should not have continued trading and, besides, these good people asserted that we should remain amongst them if it were true that we loved them.

"For - as they said - if you go elsewhere, we have reason to fear not only for ourselves but for the whole country as our interests are bound together. Now, however, that you take us as your hosts, we need no longer be afraid as we might, for if you had chosen another place and some ill-intended person had done you harm, not only the French but the Hurons, also would turn upon us."

I could add here other arguments and considerations which are not to be despised, as, for example, this is a rather convenient place to fish, to hunt and for embarking. But the chief reason is the first I mentioned. Among the towns anxious to have us is Oenrio, the people of which have been the most insistent. This little village, near enough to us, used to be a part of the town where we had stayed before. But we did not think it good to stay there at this time, simply because it is only right that this village and ours should form a single town, as much for their common interest as for our own activities and ministry. Not long ago, we gave presents to both of them, at the same time, for this purpose. Our gifts have great impact on them, but nevertheless they are still undecided.

Building our cabin

Having therefore settled on staying where we are, there was an immediate need of building a cabin. A house in this country is neither a Louvre nor a palace, and is nothing like the splendid buildings of our France, nor even comparable to the smallest of cottages. Nonetheless there are houses here somewhat better and more comfortable than those of the Montagnais. I cannot better explain the nature of Huron cabins than to compare them to the bowers and garden arbours (at

home), some of which instead of branches and greenery, are covered with cedar bark, others with large pieces of ash, elm, fir, or spruce bark. Although cedar is best according to common thought and practice, it has this danger that it is almost as easy to set aflame as matches, whence many a town is burnt out. To mention no others, this year two were entirely destroyed in less than a ten day period and another, that of Louis de Sainte Foy, partially burned. And once we also saw our cabin ablaze but thank God we extinguished the flames at once. These cabins or bowers are of fifty, a hundred, one hundred and fifty, two hundred feet. The usual width is about twenty feet and the height is about the same. There is only one story and there is no cellar, nor room, nor garret. There is no window, no chimney - only a miserable aperture in the roof of the cabin, left to permit smoke to escape. This is the way they built our house for us. The people of Oenrio and of our village worked at it in return for some gifts from us. It took a lot of effort on our part to have it completed, as much because almost all the Indians were sick, as because of the working together of the two villages. Although the work was not great, those of our village imitated those of Oenrio, who, hoping to attract us, in the end, to their village, simply amused themselves without advancing the work. We were almost into the month of October before we were under shelter. We have fitted up the inside to suit ourselves. Even though it is not much, the Indians never tire of coming to see it and seeing it to wonder at it.

We have divided it into three parts, the first part from the door on serves as an ante-room, as a protection from the wind, and as a storeroom for our supply of corn, in the manner of the Indians. The second part is that in which we live. That same place serves as our kitchen, our carpentry shop, our mill (or place to pound the corn), our dining room, our sitting room and our bedroom. On both sides in Huron style are two shelves called Endicha on which (we place) boxes to hold our clothes and other small objects. Below, where the Hurons pile their wood, we have placed small bunks in which to sleep, and in which to hide some of our possessions from the thieving hands of the Hurons. They, themselves, sleep beside the fire. Both of us, nevertheless, have nothing but the earth for bedstead. Our mattress and pillow are bark and boughs covered by a rush mat. Our clothes and a few furs do duty for our sheets and covering. The third part of our dwelling is also divided again into two sections, by means of a bit of carpentry, which gives it a good enough appearance much wondered at for its novelty. In one of these sections is our little chapel where we say Mass daily and to which we go for our prayers. It is true, though, that their continual noise keeps us from this (except in the morning and evening when everybody is asleep), and compels us to go outside to say our prayers.

In the other section we put our tools. The whole house is only thirty feet in length and about eighteen feet wide. And so we are housed - though not so snug as to keep out a good deal of rain, snow and cold.

The Indians wonder

Nevertheless - as I have said - they never tire coming to see us, with wonder in their eyes, especially since we have two doors made by a carpenter and our mill and our clock have been running. It is impossible to describe the astonishment of these simple people and their admiration of the intelligence of the French. But they say it all, when they call us Ondaki, that is "Demons." We turn this last word to their profit, saying to them "Now then, my brothers, you have seen and

admired that - and it seems right to you, when you see something out of the ordinary in saying Ondaki, to say that those who perform so many marvels must be "Demons." And yet, what is more wonderful than the beauty of the sky and the sun? What is as wonderful as to see year by year the trees, seemingly dead in wintertime, all bare and disfigured, take on again, unfailingly, each spring a new life, a new dress. The corn you plant rots and from its decay spring fine stalks and better ears - yet you do not say 'He who made so much beauty and who every year shows us so many wonders, must be some kind of 'oki' with outstanding intelligence.'" No one has come but wants to turn the mill. We do not use it, however, since through experience our flour is better ground in the Indian way in a wooden mortar than in the mill. I believe it is because the mill makes too fine a flour. As to our clock, a thousand things could be said.

They all think of it as a living thing, for they cannot imagine it to sound itself. When it is about to strike, they look about to see if we are all present, to see whether someone is hiding to give it a shake.

They thought that it could hear, especially when one of the Frenchmen, as a joke, called out on the last striking sound - "Stop striking", and at once it became silent. They call it "the chief of the day." When it strikes, they say it is speaking. When they visit us they ask how often the chief has already spoken. They ask what it eats. They remain for an entire hour and sometimes for several just to hear it speak. At first they asked "What is it saying?". We told them two things which they have not forgotten. The first, that in winter time when it strikes 'four' it says, "Leave, go away - so that we may close our door."

Immediately they rise and go. The second was that at noon it said 'Yo eiouahaoua' that is "Put on the kettle." This word is still better remembered. For among them are free-loaders who never fail to appear then to share our meal. They eat at all hours, if they have anything, but ordinarily they have two meals a day, in the morning and the evening, so they are quick to share ours during the day.

Speaking of their wonderment I might, here, set down several facts concerning the lodestone, which they examined to see if it had glue on it; a glass with eleven sides which reflected a single object as many times; a little bottle in which a fly is enlarged to the size of a beetle; a prism; the carpenter's tools; and particularly writing. They cannot imagine that one of us in the village having told them something could at the same time put it into writing so the another, in a house quite a piece away, could repeat at once on seeing the writing (what was said). I believe they have tried this a hundred times. All this serves to make them well disposed toward us and more easily dealt with, whenever there arises something concerning the wonders and deep mysteries of our faith. Their belief in our intelligence and ability leads them to believe without question what we tell them.

But now we must say something about the country, the customs and the costumes of the Hurons, their attitude to the faith, and about our feeble labours.

As to the first, the scarcity of paper and the lack of time compel me to say briefly what might fill a big book. The Huron country is not large. Its greatest extent can be covered in three or four days. It is a beautiful and largely flat land. It is surrounded and criss-crossed by a number of very

beautiful lakes or rather seas. From this we know the one which lies to the north and northwest as the fresh-water sea (la mer douce). We cross it on the way from the Bissiriniens.

The soil is sandy for the most part but not in all places. However, it brings forth in quantity very good Indian Corn and is - we can say - the granary for most of the Algonquins. There are some twenty villages with about 30,000 persons, speaking the same language (not too hard if one has an instructor). This language has its distinctions of gender, number, persons and moods. In a word it is true, even sophisticated language contrary to what many think.

Common Language

I am glad to find that this is a language common to some twelve other nations, all sedentary and numerous. These are the Conkhandeerrhonons, Khionontaterrhonons (Tobacco), Atinouandaronks (Neutrals), Sonontoerrhonons (Senecas), Onontaerrhonons (Onandagas), Ouioenrhonons (Cayugas), Onoiochronons (Oneidas), Agnierrhonons (Mohawks), Andastoerrhonons (Andastes), Scahentoarrhonons, Rhierrhonons (Eries), and Ahouenrochrhonons. The Hurons are friendly to all except the Sonontoerrhonons (Senecas), Onontaerrhonons (Onandagas), Ouioenrhonons (Cayugas), Onoiochrhonons (Oneidas) and Agnierrhonons (Mohawks), all of whom we group under the name Iroquois. And yet they are already at peace with the Sonontoerrhonons (Senecas) since they defeated them last year in springtime. Delegates from the entire area have gone to Sonontoen to ratify this peace, and it is said that the Onontaerrhonons, Ouioenrhonons, Onoiochronons and Agnierrhonons wish to become parties thereto. But there is no certainty to this. If it were, it would be a magnificent opening for the Gospel. They wanted me to go to this Sonontoen, but I thought it unwise to go elsewhere until we had laid the foundations of the Gospel law more firmly here, and until we had set up a code by which other nations converted in the future may guide themselves. Indeed I prefer not to go to any other place unless they recognize us right away as preachers of Jesus Christ.

It is clear and so evident that there is a God who made heaven and earth that our Hurons cannot entirely ignore it. Though their minds are greatly obscured by the shadows of age-old ignorance, by their faults and sins, yet they do grasp something. But their misunderstanding is grave. Having some knowledge of God, they neither honour Him, nor love Him, nor fittingly serve Him; for they have no places of worship, no priests, nor holy days - in fact no ceremonial whatsoever.

Their legend has it that a certain woman named Eataentsic made the earth and man. They give her an aide named Jouskeha, who is said to be her grandson with whom she governs the earth. This Jouskeha has care of living beings and all things concerning life. For this reason, therefore, they say he is good. Eataentsic has care of the dead and because they believe she causes death, they say she is bad. And there are among them such secret mysteries that only the old men can speak trustworthily and with authority so as to be believed. Thus it was that a certain young man, talking to me about this, said boastfully "Am I not very learned?" Some have told me that the house of these two divinities is towards the east, at the end of the world. Now with them the world does not extend beyond their country, that is to say America. Others place them right in the centre. This god and goddess live like themselves but without hunger, make feasts as they do, are

as loose as they are. In brief, they imagine them to be like themselves. And yet, though they make them human and corporeal, they seem to endow them with a certain immenseness in all places. They say that this Eataentsic fell from the sky where there are people as there are here. When she fell she was with child. But if you ask who made heaven and its dwellers they have no other answer except that of this they have no knowledge. And when we preach to them about one God, Creator of heaven and earth and all things; when we speak of hell and of paradise and others of our mysteries, the obstinate among them reply these things may be good enough for our own people but not for them. Each place has its own way of doing things.

Their beliefs

But having shown them, by means of a little globe we had brought with us, that there was only one world, they remained without reply.

I find in their marriage two things that please me greatly: first, they have only one wife; the second, they do not marry their relations in the direct or collateral line no matter what the degree of relationship. However there is enough to find fault with, if only the frequency with which men change their wives, and the women their husbands.

They believe in the immortality of the soul, though they consider it corporeal. This is the main part of their religion. All else is superstition which we hope, through the grace of God, to change to the true religion, and, like the spoils taken from the enemy, to turn it to the honour of our Lord and the personal advantage of each one. To be sure, if one day, they become Christian and pay as much attention to their beliefs as they do in vain to their superstitions, then we can do nothing better than to imitate them, for even the most avaricious among them spare nothing. We have seen some of them practically stripped of all their goods, because several of their friends had died, to whose souls they had made gifts.

Besides, dogs, deer, fish and other animals, in their opinion, have immortal and rational souls. In proof of which the old men relate fables which they try to pass off for the truth.

There is no mention either of punishment or reward in the realm of the dead. Nor do they make any distinction between the good and the bad, the virtuous and the wicked. They bury both with equal ceremony - for example, we have seen this in the instance of a youth, who, greatly distressed because his wife had been taken from him, poisoned himself. Their superstitions are unending - their feasts, their medicines, their fishing, their hunting, their wars, in short, practically the whole of their lives turn on this pivot. In this regard dreams, above all, exercise great influence.

Medicine men

The whole country, and I believe it is the same elsewhere, has no lack of evil men, who, from jealousy or from a spirit of spite or from some other motive, poison, bewitch, and finally, sooner or later, kill their victims. When such people are caught in the act, they are put to death at once, without any semblance of trial, and there is no further trouble. (As to other killings, they are blamed on the entire nation of the killer.) Nor do I know of any other person who can be put to death with impunity. I did know of a girl who was a thief, who was summarily killed without further inquiry, but it was done by her own brother. If some traitor shows himself as plotting the

ruin of his country, they make a common effort to get rid of him as soon as possible. But such instances are very rare.

They claim that their medicine men ruin them, for if someone has succeeded in anything, if his trading, or his hunting has been successful, these wicked men cast a spell on him or some other member of his household, so that he might spend everything on the medicine man and his medicines.

As a result, there are a great number of medicine men, styled Arendiouane, to cure these spells and other maladies. I think these are the true sorcerers allied to the devil. Some only diagnose the illness and this in diverse ways such as by recourse to fire magic, water magic, necromancy, by feasts, by dances and by songs. Others try to cure the disease by blowing, by concoctions and other ridiculous tricks, which possess no actual force or efficacy. But neither one nor the other does anything without generous gifts and ample pay.

Diviners

There are in this country, some diviners who are also styled Arendiouane, who promise to make it rain or to make it stop, and predict future events. The devil reveals some secrets to them but with so much obscurity that it is not easy to call them liars. For instance, there was from the village of Scanonaenrat a medicine man, who shortly before the burning of the above mentioned village had seen in a dream three flames falling from the sky upon the village. But the devil had not explained to him this enigma, for having obtained from the village a white dog with which to make a feast, and from which he might divine information, he remained as ignorant afterwards as before.

Recently as I was in the cabin of Louis de Sainte-Foy, an old sorceress and diviner in the village said she had seen those who had gone off to war, that they were returning with a prisoner. We shall see whether she has spoken the truth. Her method is that of fire-magic. She draws for you in your hut the Lake of the Iroquois. Then on one side she makes as many fires as there are men who have gone on this journey - and on the other side as many fires as there are enemies to fight. Then, if her spell works she lets you understand that the fires have crossed over, which means the warriors have already crossed the lake. A fire, which puts out one of those on the other side, means a defeated enemy. But if it attracts itself another without extinguishing it, it means a man who has been spared and taken prisoner. And in this way - to end this discourse which would be too long if I tried to say everything - the devil amuses these poor people by putting his impieties and supervisions in place of the acquiescence which they should have to the Providence of God, and the worship they should offer Him.

Their Morals

So far as morals are concerned, the Hurons are rather loose, although on two accounts less so than many Christians who will some day stand ashamed before them. You will see neither kissing nor immodest caressing: and in their marriage a man will remain two and three entire years without having relations with his wife while she is nursing her child. They are gluttons even to the point of vomiting, though, it is true, this does not happen often and only in superstitious feasts, which they take part in rather unwillingly, and besides they put up with

hunger much better than we do. So much so that having fasted two or three entire days, you will see them still paddling, carrying loads, singing, laughing, joking with each other as though they had dined well.

They are lazy, are liars, thieves and constant beggars. Some consider them vindictive, but, as far as I can see, I think this vice to be more common elsewhere than here.

But they also have some remarkable moral qualities. We notice, foremost, a great love and bond for each other, which they are careful to develop by marriage, by gifts, by their feasts and continual visiting. When they come back from fishing, hunting and their trading, they share a great deal with one another. If they have something special, even if they have bought it or it has been given to them, they make a feast for the whole village.

Hospitality

Their hospitality to every manner of stranger is noteworthy in their feasts. They give them the best of what they have prepared, and, as I have already said, I do not know whether anything to equal this can be found elsewhere. I think I have read in the lives of the Fathers that a pagan army was converted on seeing the charity and hospitality of a Christian town, whose inhabitants vied with each other in welcoming and caring for these strangers. The pagans rightly supposed that such kind hearts who were so considerate of everyone without distinction must have the true religion and adore the true God, the common Father of all.

And so, it is our hope, that our Lord will finally give the light of his knowledge and the fervour of his grace to this nation which He seems to have prepared by the practice of this excellent quality. They never close a door to a stranger and having once received him into their houses, they give him the best of what they have. They never send him away and when of his own accord he does leave, he repays them with a single "Thank-you." This leads me to hope that in the future, if God should be pleased to enlighten their minds, they will correspond perfectly to the graces and inspirations of his Son. Since He came as a stranger to his own house, these good people, I tell myself, will receive Him at any time and will not make him wait at the door - (through their hardness of heart). They will not withhold anything in the entire gamut of their affections. They will not betray him, nor drive him away by any serious fault. They will ask nothing in his service, other than his honour and glory. This is all that one could wish for in the faithfulness of a soul, for the proper and holy use of grace.

Patience

What shall I say of their extraordinary patience in poverty, want and sickness? This year, we have seen entire villages in dire want, their food only a little tasteless sagamite, and still not one word of complaint, not a single sign of impatience. They certainly, receive news of death with more composure than do those Christian gentle folk to whom one does not dare mention a word of it. Our Indians hear it not only without despair but without the slightest emotion and without the least sign in their countenance.

Especially have we marveled at the steadfastness of our Christians. The last but one who died, named Joseph Oatii, slept on the ground for all of four or five months before and after his baptism, so wasted that he was nothing but bones. He lived in a cabin so miserable that the winds

whistled through it from all sides. He was covered during the winter cold with a very light skin of some black animals or squirrels. He was poorly fed. Yet he was never heard to utter a single complaint. May Our Lord Jesus Christ be forever praised.

Our hopes and efforts

On such dispositions and foundations we hope, with God's grace, to build the Christian Church among these people who, besides, are already well disposed towards us and think highly of us. We must now live up to our vocation and harken to the voice of Our Lord who tells us "videte regiones, quoniam albae sunt iam ad messem" (see how the fields are already ripe for the harvest). It is true, Reverend Father, that "messis multa, operarii pauci" (the harvest is great, but the laborers few). And moreover we find ourselves so inadequate for such a great work - at least I am - therefore I beseech Reverend Father Provincial and you to send us help. for this I would willingly cry out to the Lord "mitte quem missurus es" (send whom you will). As for ourselves we are but stammering children.

Yet, trusting in the goodness of God and not in our own strength or efforts, here is what we have done for the conversion of this race since our coming. First of all we busied ourselves, studying the language which because of the complexity of its compound words seemss endless. But we can, none the less, do nothing without such study. Everyone here has applied himself most zealously, reviving the ancient way of writing on birchbark, for lack of paper. More than anyone else, Fathers Davost and Daniel have worked at it. They know as many words as I do and perhaps more. But they have had as yet no practice in quickly forming and joining them together, although Father Daniel already expresses himself quite passably. As for myself, I am teaching it to our French. If God does not give me some extra assistance, I shall be a long time at school to the Indian, so rich is their language. But this does not stop me from understanding almost all that is said and from making them understand sufficiently my own efforts, even in the explanation of our most sublime doctrines.

After that we are busied in visiting, pleading with, and instructing the sick, who are, as I have said here very numerous. Through this pious exercise, we have won souls for Our Lord, to the number of thirteen. the first was a little girl of this village who was only four or five months old. She died a quarter of an hour after her baptism in which she was named Josepha. This was to fulfill a vow I had made to give this name o the first one we should baptize, in gratitude for the many favors we have received and are receiving through the intercession of this great Saint. It was the sixth of September 1634. The second was another little girl about two years old. We baptized her on the following day. She died on the eleventh of the same month, having been named Mary.

On the 26th of the same month, I baptized Mary Oquiaendis, the mother of the village chief and grandmother of the other Mary. She is still living and attributes her recovery to the virtue of holy baptism. She talks about it everywhere. In fact, she was almost dead. As soon as she was baptized she began to improve.

Joseph Joutaya

On the 20th of October I left to go to the Petun Nation. On this trip God gave me the grace to

baptize and send to Heaven three little children. One of these, among others, was about to breathe his last, when I entered the longhouse. I scarcely had time to baptize him. when I returned from my trip, I found that Father Daniel had baptized Joseph Joutaya who was thought to be at the point of death. I had already given him instructions. he survived a long time, though in an ever weakening condition, but doing many an act of virtue. We gave him both physical and spiritual assistance. And this, so much that both he and his whole household thought that he lived longer because of the two-fold help he received from us. At last, having died piously in the confession of and prayer to the true God and in repentance for his sins, we solemnly buried him as was his desire.

We all admired the care, the love and perseverance of his wife in the duties and attention she gave him during his very long quite filthy and most loathsome illness. she and all her household, of whom we have already baptized three, have continued well disposed towards us. They have several times declared to me that they would all be at our service in life, in death and beyond. But we do not think them yet ready (for baptism).

It is in this household that the first huron, I ever baptized lives. This was in the year one thousand six hundred and twenty-nine, before we left this country. He was a little child looked upon as dead, who seemed to be born and live again in a two fold sense in the lifegiving waters of holy baptism. He still lives, aged about five and is quite a gentle child.

Other baptisms

On the twenty-first of October Joseph Sondaarouhane was baptized. He was some forty or fifty years old. He had great goodness and was by nature gentle. He was for a long time past quite attached to me. He yielded his blessed spirit to God on November the twentieth. On the same day Joachim Tsindacaiendoua, an old man of eighty, was baptized. He was one of the best natured Hurons I have ever known. Next day he left this life to begin a better, as we believe. We buried him with all rites in a place apart. This ceremony focused the attention of the whole village on us and made several desire that we should honour their burial in the same way. This was particularly true of Joseph Joutaya mentioned above, who after the burial, told me that he would have been very glad if we had passed through his cabin as we then were, so that he could have seen us from his bed of sickness. They had made so much of it that he declared most strongly that he wished to be buried by us. This was done.

Since I have mentioned this man's desire, I will tell a noteworthy thing that happened to him after his baptism. The devil appeared to him one day in the form of his dead brother. Entering the cabin, he did not greet him, but seated himself on the opposite side of the fire, facing our new Christian, he remained a long time without saying a word. At last, opening his lips, he said "How now, my brother, you want to leave us?" Joseph, not yet sufficiently prepared for this combat, answered "No, my brother, I have no desire to leave you - I will not leave you.." At this - it is said - the false brother began to embrace him. None the less, he has since repeatedly declared that he wants to go to heaven.

On the twenty-seventh of November, Martin Tsicok, already a very old man of a very kindly disposition, was baptized. This good man continually called upon Jesus and Mary from his

baptism even to his death on the 15th of December. I began his instructions with this truth that, after death, our souls go to hell or to heaven; that heaven is a place of happiness and of peace, while on the contrary, hell is one of fire, pain and everlasting suffering; and that he should think, while still living, to which of these places he wanted to go and stay forever. Then this good old man, turning to his wife, said "My wife, isn't it better to go to heaven? I am afraid of the terrible fires of hell." His wife agreed and thus he willingly gave heed to the lessons we gave him.

the nineteenth of January, I set out for the dwelling of Louis de Sainte-Foy some seven or eight leagues distance from our village. I was neither willing nor able to go earlier, although he had gone to the Neutrals to find his father who had remained there a cripple.

On this journey, while passing through Onnentissati, I went to see one named Oukhahitoua, who last year had carried one of our men. Finding him dying, I instructed him. He believed and held in scorn his past life. He was baptized under the name of Francois. Two days later he left this world for heaven.

On the twenty-ninth of March, we baptized with full rites in our little chapel Joseph Oatii. Francois Petit Pre was his godfather, and many were present. We had been instructing him for a long time. Thus he himself answered the questions I asked in the Huron tongue. This young man was not at all well. We had won him by continued help, which had twice saved his life. And so he willingly entrusted to us the care of his soul, which went happily to God on the fourteenth of April. He was fully fortified with the Sacrament of Extreme-Unction.

We admired most his patience and peace of mind, especially after his baptism. We had hardly begun his lessons when he began to say, often, both day and night, "Jesus have mercy on me! Mary and Joseph, help me!"

Lastly, on the twentieth of April, at Oenrio I baptized a very old lady, who died on the twenty-fourth. When I just spoke to her, asking whether she wished to go to heaven or hell, she did not answer, except to say she would go where her son wished. But having told her that her father, the late Joachim Tsindacaiendoua had gone to heaven, she said "Then I wish to go there."

These then are the results of our visits and private instructions. I think the harvest would have been greater if I could have left our village to visit others. May it please Our Lord to accept these few first fruits and give us strength and opportunity to gather more of them. We have instructed many others who asked insistently for baptism. But not seeing them in danger of death, we have put them off to further instructions.

About the month of December, the snow began to remain on the ground and the Indians kept to their village. All summer and autumn, they are for the most part either in their field shelters, taking care of their corn, or on the lake fishing, or trading. This causes difficulties in instructing them. So now seeing them all together at the beginning of this year we determined to preach publicly to all, to make known to them the reason for coming to their country, which is not for furs, but to proclaim the true God and his son, Jesus Christ, the one saviour of our soul.

We gave this instruction or catechism in our own cabin, for we did not yet have another adequate church. This is often the most we can do, for their feasts, their dances and their games so occupy them that we cannot get them together as we would like.

Our Catechism

The method we usually follow is this: We call everyone through the village chief who gathers them all in our house as though in Council - or sometimes at the sound of the bell. I don surplice and birretta to give us more dignity to my appearance. In the beginning we chant, on our knees, the "Our Father," translated into Huron verse. Father Daniel, as its author, sings a verse alone, and then all of us together sing it again. Those Hurons, particularly the children, who already know it, take pleasure in singing with us, and the others in listening. That done, when everyone is seated, I stand up and make the sign of the cross for everyone. Then having repeated in brief what I said the last time, I explain something new. After that we question the young boys and girls, giving a little bead of glass or porcelain to those who deserve it. The parents are very pleased to see their children answer well and carry off some small prize, of which they make themselves worthy by the care they take to come privately for instruction. On our part to increase the interest we have each lesson repeated by our two little French boys who question each other. This entralls the Indians. The whole is brought to an end by speeches of the elders who put forth their difficulties and sometimes make me listen in turn to the tale of their belief.

We start our catechizing by this noteworthy truth that their souls, being immortal, all go after death to either heaven or hell. So we address them either in public or in private. I added that they have the choice, in life, to go after death to one or the other and they ought to consider now, what it would be. Whereupon on good old man said to me, "Let him, who will, go to the fire of hell; I for my part, want to go to heaven." All the others agreed with him and making the same reply beg us to point out the way, to clear away the stones, the trees and the thickets which might stop them.

Difficulties

Our Hurons, as you see, are not the dullards one might think. They seem to me to be people of common sense and I find them invariably quite docile. Nevertheless, some are obstinate, attached to their superstitions and evil ways. This is particularly true of the old men, for outside of these, who are not numerous, the rest know nothing of their beliefs. We have two or three of this kind in our village. I am often in argument with the,, where I overcome them, make them contradict themselves, so much that in all simplicity they admit their ignorance, while the others make fun of them. But there is still no yielding, falling back on this that their country is not like ours, that they have quite another God, another heaven, and in a word, other ways.

They tell us how the woman named Eataenstic fell from heaven into the waters which cove the earth and that little by little the earth became bare. I ask them who created this heaven where this woman could not remain. They remain silent and likewise when I press them to tell me who formed the earth, seeing that it was beneath the waters before this woman fell. One man very subtly asked in this connection where God was before the creation of the world. The answer was made easier for me, following St. Augustine, that it was for them to understand the question put to me. Another good old man, having fallen sick, would not hear of going to heaven, saying he

wanted to go with his ancestors. A few days later he gave in, telling me an amusing tale: "Rejoice," he said, "for I have returned from the land of the souls and I found no one there. They have all gone to heaven." There is nothing useless for salvation; where it pleases God, even dreams.

Two things, among others, have helped us despite the lack of success we have had here, through the grace of God. The first is, as I have already said, the health in which God has kept us amidst general and widespread sickness. For our Hurons have thought that, if they believed and served God, they would not die in such large numbers.

The second is the temporal assistance we have given the sick. Having brought some small delicacies for ourselves, we shared with them, giving to one a few prunes, to another a few raisins, to others something else. The poor people came from far away to share these things.

In autumn, when our French servants had good hunting, we carried portions of all the game to the sick. That won their hearts, chiefly as they were dying with neither meat nor fish to season their sagamite. Add to that all our French have, thank God, conducted themselves so well and so peacefully, all year, that they have drawn down the blessing of heaven. We also owe much to our glorious Saint Joseph, spouse of our Lady and patron of the Hurons, who has so clearly helped us on several occasions. It was quite noteworthy that on his feast day and during the octave thereof, supplies came to us from everywhere.

Saranhes

Before ending I shall say only one thing about Louis de Sainte-Foy. I would prefer not to mention it, were it not that it may help to make this nation better understood. It is this: he is not as he ought to be and as we wanted. Nevertheless there is still hope. Last year he was captured by the Iroquois in the general defeat and carried away a captive. This cost him a finger: a lash of the whip which should be sufficient to bring him back to his duty. His father was not taken. He escaped by flight, but in fleeing he suffered much. As he said, he remained some thirty days struggling against three powerful enemies - that is, cold, for it was spring and he was naked and without fire; weakness, for he was crippled in both legs, and was not yet cured; and finally hunger. In reference to the last, he tells a remarkable story - if it be true. He says that having gone without eating for some ten or twelve days, and praying to God, of whom he had heard his son speak, he saw as it were, a pot of fat such as he had seen in Quebec, filled with a tasty liquid. He heard a voice that said to him, "Saranhes, be of good cheer, you will not die; take, drink what is in this pot to strengthen yourself." This he did and was wonderfully strengthened by it. A little later he found in a thicket a packet of corn with which he was just able to sustain his life, until some Indians of the Neutral nation, happily finding him, carried him off to their village.

This man, has said to me that he and all his family want to become Christian, and to help bring the entire village to God's service. But his mind is as devious as his son's and I do not yet trust him. Our hope is in God and in Our Lord Jesus Christ who shed his blood for the salvation of the Hurons, as well as for everyone else.

It is on this help, and not on our own efforts, that we trust to see here some day a flourishing Christianity. The minds are, certainly, ready and willing. The only things I see hard to abolish are

the freedom of the women whom they change at will, and certain superstitions. For the rest they have no repugnance to the Faith nor to Christian law. They turn willingly to God in their needs. They come to have their seed blessed after sowing it. They ask us what we want of them. We have nothing to fear except our sins and imperfections (I most of all). In truth I feel most unworthy of this work. Send us saintly men or pray to God our Lord that we may be such as he desires. May we be recommended a thousand times to the holy sacrifices (Masses) of your Reverence and of all our Fathers and Brothers.

From our little house of St. Joseph in the village of Ihonatiria among the Hurons this 27th of May 1635, the day on which the Holy Spirit descended visibly upon the Apostles,

Your Reverence's
humble and obedient servant in our Lord,
Jean de Brebeuf

Reverend Father,

Since the above was written to you we have baptized a sick child, great-grandnephew of the late Joachim Tsindacaiendoua. And this the more openly as this family seems well disposed to the faith. Our Lord has restored him to life, to the astonishment of his parents, who remarked that immediately after the baptism he rested quietly. This will serve to offset an ill repute that the devil is sowing in some minds, that they will never get better after baptism. This is but one of the wiles of the devil. He has many others, some of which he has already used. But our Lord will overcome him. It is in our Lord we trust. Perhaps, your Reverence will be pleased to hear that the winter has been very short and mild. The country is such that it grows enough to feed the entire people. All this spring has been very clear and dry., The crops are beginning to suffer for want of rain. I pray our Lord that it may please Him to remedy this, and to give us what is necessary for His glory, for the happy beginnings of this Christianity, and for the blessing of the little efforts that our Society is undertaking in these distant lands, under the protection of the Fleurs-de-Lys and of our great King who now is causing them to flourish so wonderfully.