

1613.

Extrava-
gant custom
of the Male-
cites.

made an excursion into the country to ascertain the disposition of the Indians of that district. In this excursion a very singular thing befell him.

As he was passing near a village, he heard frightful howls. He judged that they were mourning for the dead; but an Indian, whom he chanced to meet on the way, told him that a child was dying, and that if he quickened his pace, he would still be in time to baptize it. The missionary immediately started to run; and on entering the village, perceived all the inhabitants ranged in a line on both sides, and in the middle the father holding the little patient in his arms. At every sigh of the dying child he uttered cries, more suited to strike terror than excite compassion. All the Indians replied in the same tone, and the forests around echoed with their howls.

The missionary, touched at this spectacle, approaches the child's father, and asks whether he will allow it to be baptized. The poor man answered only by putting the child in his hands. The missionary gave it to Mr. de la Motte to hold, sent for water, and baptized it. During the ceremony perfect silence reigned. These savages seemed to expect some extraordinary result. The servant of God perceived it; and filled with a truly apostolic confidence, he aloud conjured the Almighty to vouchsafe to draw from the bosom of his mercy an instance of his power, in favor of this blind but docile people.

A dying
child healed
by the vir-
tue of bap-
tism.

At the close of his prayer, he took the child and put it in its mother's arms, telling her to put it to the breast. She did so, the child suckled for a considerable time, and then seemed as well as though it had never been sick.¹ It is easy to conceive the amazement of the Indians at the sight of so prompt and so unexpected a cure. They stood long as if deprived of motion, and the missionary derived all the fruit that he could then expect from so wonderful an

¹ It is somewhat strange to find O'Toole, p. 128) attributes the cure an Irish saint intervening here, but to relics of that saint. See Carayon, O'Hanlon (Life of St. Lawrence Doc. Inédits, xii., p. 53.