

only to those who were known to be better able to understand them, and whose authority might greatly aid the progress of the gospel.¹ 1640.

I have thought fit to enlarge a little on the obstacles encountered in converting the Indians of Canada. At least, those who are of the persuasion that the Faith has made no progress among these Indians cannot accuse me of having dissembled them; nor do I fear to be suspected of exaggerating the fatigues, the sufferings, and the perseverance of the apostolic laborers, who have irrigated with their sweat and blood this part of the vineyard, which the Father of the family had confided to them. All New France, for more than a century, renders so public a testimony to the severe and truly apostolic life which they led, and the eminent sanctity of many, that it cannot be allowed to doubt, and is impossible to deny it. What I shall say hereafter of the blessings which heaven poured down on their labors rests on the same testimony.

Obstacles
to the
missions.

Yet, without making a parallel between the apostles and the first founders of the Christian Church, I believe I may in justice ask on what grounds they would pretend to doubt the reality of the conversions, which I cannot avoid mentioning without being wanting to what the fidelity of history requires; great examples of virtue, seen in practice among a great number of neophytes, and wonders which God has worked in their favor? Experience teaches us that three sorts of persons will be extremely on their guard on all these points. Those who, having known Indians, while agreeing that they are not devoid of a kind of ability, maintain that they are altogether limited as to all that does not fall under the senses or has no relation to their affairs, of which the sphere is very restricted; whence they conclude that it is impossible to impress them sufficiently with the great truths of our religion to

¹ Relation, 1639, p. 54; Father 1638, MS. All testimony shows the Charles Garnier, Letter, April 28, extent of instruction given.