

Neophytes were seen undertaking prolonged journeys, in the most inclement season, solely with the view to announce Christ to tribes far remote; and those who could not leave their towns for so long a period did not allow their zeal to remain inactive. In public and private meetings they incessantly inculcated obedience to their pastors and submission to the sacred laws of the Church. Those who had any authority over the multitude could not bring themselves to allow any fault to pass unpunished, little as it might have attracted notice or given scandal, and it was often somewhat difficult to moderate their severity in the matter.

At Sylleri especially men admired what the first-fruits of grace in a new-formed Christian fold could effect.¹ This town was not exposed, as it was some time after, to the attacks of the Iroquois; but however little its inhabitants went from it, they ran the risk of being carried off, and this had already happened to several. Deprived thus of all recourse to the chase, on which these tribes cannot avoid relying, they were often reduced to want of the actual necessities of life. The French did all in their power to relieve their more pressing wants; but being themselves generally poor, their charity was a feeble resource for so many famishing creatures. Besides the little taste and skill ever shown by Algonquin tribes for the cultivation of the earth, these Christians, often compelled to shut themselves up in the palisades of their towns to escape the Iroquois war-parties that were in the field, were unable either to till their fields in safety or to count on reaping the little they had sowed.

This wretched state, to which there was no apparent remedy, did not, however, diminish the confidence of these fervent proselytes in Divine Providence. Ill-disposed men in vain used every stratagem to withdraw them from the service of a God who, they said, forsook them, and let

¹ Relation de la Nouvelle France, 1643, pp. 8, 12; 1644, p. 4.