

1635-6. sion on them. They were especially struck with their courage and disinterestedness, and with their contempt of life. It did not seem reasonable to believe that such men were mistaken in the affair of religion. In the third place, they agreed that one must have lost all sense to imagine that men who had no interest in leading them into error would, merely to do it, have undertaken such long voyages, run such risks, exposed themselves to so much hardship, exiled themselves so far from friends and kindred to spend their days with unknown tribes, and remain there in spite of the cold welcome they had received and the manner in which they continued to be treated. These reflections, made at first only by a few individuals, less rooted in prejudice, soon spread to the masses, and suddenly changed the face of affairs; but the missionaries had yet another reason for acting cautiously with this people, and not receiving into the number of neophytes all who presented themselves.

They carry
their pre-
caution too
far.

This was the reluctance which most evinced to renounce practices, indifferent in themselves, but suspected by the missionaries as not exempt from superstition. These Indians in vain protested that they did not acknowledge any thing supernatural in them. All appeared suspicious in a dissembling nation, borne by an almost irresistible bent to attribute every thing to spirits. After all, laudable as mistrust and strictness are in this matter, they should not be excessive. Missionaries afterwards admitted that they had carried their precautions somewhat too far, and had thus retarded the work of God.

Character of
other na-
tions.

What was done in the Huron country to establish the faith, or at least prepare the Indians for it, was done also at Three Rivers, which began to be the rendezvous of the northern nations, in the neighborhood of Quebec, and at Tadoussac, to draw into the bosom of the Church the Algonquins, the Montagnez, and in general all with whom the French had any intercourse. The difficulties were everywhere about equally great at first, but differed