

CHAPTER III.

OF THE GENERAL CONDITION OF CHRISTIANITY IN
THESE COUNTRIES.

I CANNOT give an idea more apposite to the condition of the affairs of Christianity in these regions than by saying that we are here like those who go seeking for the mines of a land. After they have ordered all the apparatus necessary to their purpose, they first consider and observe the kinds of soil; then having ascertained some mines which seem to conceal the treasures which they desire, they ransack and dig in that place; and, as they encounter some substance which has the appearance of the metal which they are seeking, they refine it and test it in the fire. Meanwhile, if they happen to be in sufficiently great number, they go at [34] the same time to investigate other places, in order to busy themselves actively, according to their design.

In the last relation, one may have remarked three places where we thought we had found the metal which we came to seek in this barbarism,—to wit, some souls qualified for the faith, so as to form a crown of them for JESUS CHRIST. What we have since studied, was first to refine this metal; then we proceeded further, in order to discover some new treasures worthy of heaven. The result which ensued from the first labor was to ascertain truly, by the occasions which arose, who were the solid Christians, who those who had embraced the faith only