

for us merely to sow it with fidelity, and await heaven's moments. Many who only see our Hurons fifteen hundred leagues from here are impatient that they are not already all converted, and think that one must simply speak of the grandeur of the Faith in order to render it adorable; others almost despair of the salvation of these poor barbarians,—seeing that they are so removed from the sentiments not only of the Faith, but even of reason. I would earnestly entreat the former to reflect that there is no country on earth which has been converted so soon. If civilized peoples have been whole centuries [187] in acknowledging JESUS CHRIST, can one reasonably demand a readier obedience from the peoples who have been born in barbarism? If they considered them closely, they would accept for a real miracle the fact that even a single one had been converted; for it seems that neither the Gospel nor holy Scripture has been composed for them. Not only do words fail them to express the sanctity of our mysteries, but even the parables and the more familiar discourses of Jesus Christ are inexplicable to them. They know not what is salt, leaven, stronghold, pearl, prison, mustard seed, casks of wine, lamp, candlestick, torch; they have no idea of Kingdoms, Kings, and their majesty; not even of shepherds, flocks, and a sheepfold,—in a word, their ignorance of the things of the earth seems to close for them the way to heaven. The grounds for credence, taken from the fulfillment of the prophecies; from miracles, Martyrs, Councils, holy Doctors, histories both sacred and profane; from the holiness of [188] the Church, and from the external splendor which renders it venerable to the greatest Monarchs of the world,—all that