

Such a change, in a man whom one would have believed to be among the last to embrace the Faith, astonished the minds of all, but his constancy excited more admiration in them, a few days later. Misfortune suddenly came upon him; death deprived him of his only child; a niece—who in this country is a surer support for a man than are his own children—was carried off at the same time by sickness; two Iroquois, who were hidden behind a tree, rushed from their ambush and murdered, in the middle of her field, the only sister that remained to him. “Such disasters would have stunned me if I had not Faith,” he said to the Infidels; “and now I [97] see that a Christian’s riches are not without him,—that he carries his treasure in his heart; and that the hope of Heaven fortifies a soul more than all the misfortunes on earth can have strength to cast it down.” Enough life yet remained to his sister to secure her salvation. The good Neophyte spoke to her of Paradise and of hell, and made her detest her sins. She asked for Baptism, and he, who had never administered that rite, commended her to God; baptized her, as far as he was able; and, in order, as he said, that she might be more surely baptized, he made her renew her acts, and repeated her Baptism five or six times. But none of them had any effect, one more than another; for, although water was not wanting in her Baptism, he had forgotten the formula, or had never learned it. “Thou art the Master of her life, thou who hast made Heaven and earth. It matters not if she die, provided that her soul be happy in Heaven. It is thou who hast placed Faith in her heart, and now I baptize her, in order that thou mayst have mercy on her and wipe out her sins.”