

are far from the fight will arrest the course of the victories that the Faith gains here over impiety. I mean to say that the doubts that may exist in France with reference to the conversion of these nations is one of the greatest impediments that can be offered; and that God may withdraw his favors from these pagan countries because, in the midst of tempests, confidence in him has been withdrawn. For, in [154] truth, it is easy to despair of the conversion of these nations,—even in this presumption alone, that, because they are barbarians, some can hardly believe them to be men, and that we can hardly make Christians of them. But it is wrong to judge thus; for I can say in truth that, as regards Intelligence, they are in no wise inferior to Europeans and to those who dwell in France. I would never have believed that, without instruction, nature could have supplied a most ready and vigorous eloquence, which I have admired in many Hurons; or more clear-sightedness in affairs, or a more discreet management in things to which they are accustomed. Why, then, should they be incapable of having a knowledge of a true God?

In truth, their customs are barbarous in a thousand matters; but after all, in those practices which among them are regarded as evil acts and are condemned by the public, we find without comparison much less disorder than there is in France, though here the mere shame of having committed the crime is the offender's punishment. What, therefore, would their innocence be if the Faith reigned among them?

At present we have a greater [155] knowledge than ever of their language, of their customs, and of the means that must be taken to enter into their minds