

of their flock was dearer to them than love for their own lives. They employed all the moments of that time, as the most precious which they had ever had in the world; and, during the heat of the combat, their hearts were only fire for the salvation of souls. One was at the breach, baptizing the Catechumens; the other, giving absolution to the Neophytes,—both animating the Christians to die in the sentiments of piety, with which they consoled them in their miseries. Accordingly, never was their faith, or the love which they had for their good Fathers and Pastors, more lively.

An Infidel, seeing affairs in a desperate condition, spoke of taking to flight; a [38] Christian, named Estienne Annaotaha, the most esteemed in the country for his courage and his exploits over the enemy, would never allow it. “What!” he said, “could we ever abandon these two good Fathers, who for us have exposed their lives? The love which they have had for our salvation will be the cause of their death; there is no longer time for them to flee across the snows. Let us then die with them, and we shall go in company to Heaven.”

This man had made a general confession a very few days previously,—having had a presentiment of the danger wherein he saw himself involved, and saying that he wished that death should find him disposed for Heaven. And indeed he, as well as many other Christians, had abandoned himself to fervor in a manner so extraordinary, that we shall never be sufficiently able to bless the guidance of God over so many predestinated souls, for whom his divine Providence continues directing with love all the moments, both of life and of death.