

Letter from Father Gabriel Marest, Missionary  
of the Society of Jesus, to Father  
Germon, of the same Society.

At Cascaskias, an Illinois village,  
otherwise called "the Immacu-  
late Conception of the blessed  
Virgin;" November 9, 1712.

MY REVEREND FATHER,  
*The peace of Our Lord.*

I wish that I could give you some information concerning our Missions, that might correspond to the idea which you perhaps have formed of them. What is heard every day in Europe of those immense Countries studded with Towns and Villages, in which an innumerable multitude of Idolaters present themselves in crowds to the zeal of the Missionaries, would give room to believe that things here are upon the same footing. Such is very far from being the fact, my Reverend Father; in a great extent of Country, scarcely three or four Villages are found. Our life is passed in threading dense forests, in climbing mountains, in crossing lakes and rivers in canoes, that we may overtake some poor Savage who is fleeing from us, and whom we do not know how to render less savage by either our words or our attentions.

Nothing is more difficult than the conversion of these Savages; it is a miracle of the Lord's mercy: we must first make men of them, and afterward work