

to make them Christians. As they are absolute masters of themselves without being subjected to any Law, the independence in which they live enslaves them to the most brutal passions. It is true, there are Chiefs among them, but the Chiefs have no authority; if they should use threats, far from making themselves feared, they would see themselves abandoned by the very men who had chosen them for Chiefs. They gain consideration and respect only while they have, as is said here, wherewith to fill the kettle,—that is to say, wherewith to make feasts for those who are obedient to them.

From this independence springs every sort of vice that rules them. They are indolent, traitorous, fickle, and inconstant; deceitful, and naturally thievish,—so much so, as to boast of their skill in stealing; brutal, and without honor; taciturn; capable of doing everything when you are liberal toward them, but at the same time thankless and ungrateful. To do them any good gratuitously is only to uphold them in their natural pride; they become thereby more insolent; they say, “I am feared; I am sought.” Thus, however desirous we may be to give them pleasure, we are compelled to make them value the little services that we render them.

Gluttony and the love of pleasure are, above all, the vices most dominant among our Savages; they are habituated to the most indecent acts before they are even old enough to know all the shame that is connected with them. If you add to this the wandering life that they lead in the forests in pursuit of wild beasts, you will easily admit that reason must be greatly brutalized in these people; and that it is very little inclined to submit itself to the yoke of