

that is, "those who dwell in holes;" until now, they have remained unknown to the rest of men. Thus, if our good God so wills it, and preserves my life, I shall be the first to bear to them the tidings of the gospel. You can easily imagine that I shall not be in a position to undertake with any hope of success, at the outset, their instruction. I must first set about learning their language, and I have nothing which can be of any assistance to me in that study. It will only be by dint of frequent conversation with them that I shall, with our Lord's help, manage little by little to compile grammars which may be of use to the missionaries who will come after me. I have been commissioned to do the same for The language of the cristinaux and assiniboels, among whom the french have been but a short time, and who have scarcely ever heard mention made of Jesus Christ, for they have come in contact with but a few of the french, and these few have picked up here and there but a word or so of their language. I am directed not to remain permanently with these tribes, because they rove about and have no fixed dwelling-place. On the contrary, the ouant-chipouanes, if what is said of them be true, have permanent establishments, and consequently there is a better promise of doing good among them. Such, my reverend father, is the undertaking confided to my care. It is certainly beyond my strength and would call for a degree of virtue far higher than I possess; for there I will be for at least three or four years without the least spiritual succor, and removed several hundred leagues from any other priest. You will not find it difficult to comprehend that it is the severest trial I could meet with in life. I confess that I can only