

it is on a fir-tree, the ends of which rest on either bank. Its bark is ever freshly moistened and besmeared with a substance which makes it as slippery as ice. If the souls who wish to cross to the enchanting plains have the misfortune to fall at this dangerous passage, there is no help left; they are doomed forever to drink of the foul, stagnant water, or to burn in the flames, according to the side on which they fall. Such is their hell, and such is their obscure notion of what efforts must be made to secure heaven.

I leave untold a thousand other vagaries, of which, from the little said, you may form a faint idea, nor am I sufficiently versed in the matter, having but a very imperfect knowledge of their language. If it be pleasing to you, I may revert to the subject later on. I am the first missionary who has as yet undertaken to systematize the language of the Kristinaux. All . . . I am not very skillful at it. I have picked up but little during the winter, as all have been out on a warlike expedition against the Maskoutépoëls or prairie scioux. They destroyed a few cabins, and some have returned with a few scalps, which are prized as the most precious trophies of their victories. This war was the occasion for us of much suffering during the winter, as we had no other nourishment than tainted pike, boiled or dried over the fire. The kristinaux are not nearly as numerous as the assiniboels, but they are much braver, or rather much more fierce and cruel. They massacre each other on the most trivial pretext. The war and the hunt are their sole occupations. They are averse to teaching their language to others, so that what little I know has been picked up in spite of them. I