

Letter from Father Vivier, Missionary among
the Illinois, to Father * * * .

MY DEAR FRIEND,
Pax Christi.

When one leaves France for distant countries, it is not difficult to make promises to one's friends; but, when the time comes, it is no slight task to keep them, especially during the first years. We have here but a single opportunity, once a year, for sending our letters to France. It is therefore necessary to devote an entire week to writing, without interruption, if one wish to fulfill all one's promises. Moreover, what we have to write of this country is so little curious and so little edifying that it is hardly worth while to take up a pen. It is less for the purpose of gratifying your curiosity than of responding to the friendship that you display for me, that I write to you to-day. Let us try, nevertheless, to give you some idea of the country, of its inhabitants, and of our occupations. The Illinois country lies about the 39th degree of north latitude, about 9 degrees from new Orleans, the capital of the whole Colony. The climate is very much like that of France, with this difference, that the winter here is not so long and is less continuous, and the heat in summer is a little greater. The country in general is covered with an alternation of plains and forests, and is watered by very fine rivers. Wild cattle, deer, elk, bears, and wild turkeys abound everywhere, in