

of Otto, and of others that I have seen in France, either drawn upon paper or in relief on medallions.

As to the mind of the Indian, it is of good quality. I believe that souls are all made from the same stock and that they do not differ substantially. Hence, the well-formed bodies and well-regulated and well-arranged organs of these barbarians suggest that their minds too ought to function well. Education and instruction alone are lacking. Their soul is a naturally fertile soil, but it is loaded down with all the evils that a land abandoned since the birth of the world can produce. I naturally compare our Indians with [European] villagers, because both are usually without education, although our peasants are slightly more advanced in this regard. Nevertheless, people who come to this country always confess and frankly admit that the Indians are more clever than our ordinary peasants.

Moreover, if it is a great blessing to be free from a great evil, our Indians should be considered fortunate. For there are two tyrants, ambition and avarice, who distress and torture so many of our Europeans but have no dominion over these great forests. Because the Indians have neither civil regulation, nor administrative offices, nor dignities, nor any positions of command — for they obey their chief only through goodwill toward him — they never kill one another to acquire these honors. Also, they are content with basic subsistence, and so not one of them gives himself to the Devil to acquire wealth.

They profess never to get angry, though not because of the beauty of this virtue, for which they have not even a name, but rather for their own contentment and happiness. In other words, they want only to free themselves from the bitterness caused by anger. The sorcerer said to me one day, speaking of one of our Frenchmen, "He has no sense, he gets angry; as for me, nothing can disturb me. Let hunger oppress us, let my nearest relations pass to the other life, let the Iroquois, our enemies, massacre our people; I never get angry." What he says cannot be taken as an article of faith, for as he is haughtier than any other Indian, so I have seen him annoyed more often than any of them. It is true also that he often restrains and governs himself by force, especially when I expose his foolishness. I have only heard one Indian pronounce this word, *Ninich-catihin*, "I am angry," and he said it only once. But I noticed that people were wary of him, for when these barbarians are angry, they are dangerous and unrestrained.

Whoever professes not to get angry ought also to make a profession of patience. The Indians surpass us to such an extent in this respect that we ought to be ashamed. I saw them, in their hardships and in their

PAUL LE JEUNE

On the Good Things Which Are Found among the Indians

1634

If we begin with physical advantages, I will say that they possess these in abundance. They are tall, erect, strong, well proportioned, agile; there is nothing effeminate in their appearance. Those little fops that are seen elsewhere are only painted images of men, compared with our Indians. I was once inclined to believe that pictures of the Roman emperors represented the ideal of the painters rather than men who had ever existed, so strong and powerful are their heads; but I see here upon the shoulders of these people the heads of Julius Caesar, of Pompey, of Augustus,



Indian Women and Children

As imagined by a European illustrator who probably never set foot in North America.

Courtesy of the Newberry Library, Chicago.

labors, suffering cheerfully. My host, wondering at the great number of people who I told him were in France, asked me if the men were good, if they did not become angry, if they were patient. I have never seen such patience as is shown by a sick Indian. Others may yell, storm, jump, and dance, but he will scarcely ever complain. When I was with them and there was danger of great suffering, they would say to me, "We shall be sometimes two days, sometimes three, without any food to eat. Take courage, *Chibiné*, let your soul be strong to endure the pain and the hardship; try not to feel sad, as otherwise you will fall sick. Watch us. See how we keep laughing even though we have little to eat." One thing alone casts them down: That is when they see the approach of death, for they fear it beyond measure. Take away this apprehension from the Indians, and they will endure all kinds of degradation and discomfort and all kinds of trials and suffering very patiently. . . .

They are very much attached to each other and cooperate admirably. You do not see any disputes, quarrels, enmities, or reproaches among them. Men leave the household arrangements to the women without interfering with them. The women cut up and divide the food, deciding how much to give to each member of the family as they please, without any objections or anger on the part of the husband. When our provisions were disappearing rapidly under the management of a thoughtless young woman who accompanied my host, I never heard him ask her to explain what had happened to the food. I never heard the women complain because they were not invited to the feasts, because the men ate the good pieces, or because they had to work continually, gathering firewood, erecting the cabins, dressing the skins, and busying themselves with other hard work. Everyone does his own chores, gently and peacefully, without any disputes. It is true, however, that they have neither gentleness nor courtesy in their utterance; and a Frenchman could not assume the accent, the tone, and the sharpness of their voices without getting angry. Yet they do not become irritated.