

1649. proximate view of a cruel death, and carried so far as to make it the object of his most ardent desires; warned, moreover, by more than one heavenly token that his vows were heard, laughed alike at their threats and the torture itself: but the sight of his beloved neophytes, cruelly treated before his eyes, shed deep bitterness over the joy which he felt on seeing his hopes realized.¹

His companion, who had but just entered the apostolic career—to which he brought more courage than strength, and who was of a sensitive and delicate constitution—was especially, to his last sigh, a great subject of grief and anxiety to Father de Brebeuf. The Iroquois knew well, at once, that they had to deal with a man who would not gratify them by the least exhibition of weakness; and as though fearful that he would impart his intrepidity to others, they, after a time, separated him from the mass of prisoners, made him ascend a scaffold alone, and fell upon him in such a manner that they seemed beside themselves with rage and despair.

All this did not prevent the servant of God from speaking in a loud voice—sometimes to the Hurons, who no longer saw, though they heard him; sometimes to his torturers, whom he exhorted to fear the wrath of Heaven, if they continued to persecute the adorers of the true God. This liberty astonished the savages, and they were shocked by it, accustomed as they were to endure the bravado of their prisoners on similar occasions. They wished to silence him, and failing, cut off his lower lip and the extremity of his nose, applied burning torches all over his body, burnt his gums, and finally ran a red-hot iron down his throat.²

The invincible missionary, seeing himself deprived of

¹ Relation de la Nouvelle France, 1649, pp. 14, 15; Creuxius, Historia Canadensis, p. 539; Gobat, Relatio Historica, p. 103. But there is no allusion to the hot iron being thrust down his throat.

² Relation de la Nouvelle France,