

1649. After such severe checks, the Hurons utterly despaired of being able to hold their ground; and in less than a week all the towns around St. Mary's were deserted.¹ Of most there remained only the site which they had occupied, the inhabitants having fired them as they retreated, some to the forests, others to the neighboring tribes. As those who remained at St. Mary's durst not go out, because they had no doubt but that the Iroquois still kept the field, famine was soon felt in the town, and there was no apparent means of a speedy remedy. This gave the missionaries the idea of gathering the scattered remnants of the nation in some quite remote spot, that they might live exempt from fear of being disturbed there by an enemy whom they were no longer in a position to resist.²

Dispersion of the Hurons. They proposed Manitouline Island, which lies north of Lake Huron. This island is about forty leagues long from east to west, but very narrow across. The shores abound in fish; the soil in many places very good; and as it was not inhabited, it contained an immense quantity of deer. Still the missionaries' proposition was not received, for the Hurons could not bring themselves to so distant an exile from their country, which they were loth to abandon, though without courage to defend; and the missionaries were obliged to yield to their wishes and follow them to St. Joseph's Island, which is but a short distance from the mainland where they were.³

Most retire to St. Joseph's Island. This transmigration took place on the 25th of May;⁴ and in a short time there rose on this little island a town of a hundred cabins—some of eight, others of ten, fires—without counting a very great number of families scattered in

¹ St. Mary's was situated on the River Wye, near Penetanguishene: Martin's Bressani, p. 90.

² Bressani, Breve Relatione, p. 122; Relation de la Nouvelle France, 1649, p. 25; Gobat, Rel. Hist., p. 199.

³ Relation de la Nouvelle France, 1649, p. 27; Creuxius, Historia Ca-

nadensis, p. 557; Gobat, Relatio Historica, p. 113. Chaumonot, in his letter of June 1, 1649, gives the Indian name, Ah⁸endoe. According to Rev. F. Martin, it is the present Charity or Christian Island, near Penetanguishene.

⁴ May 15: Rel. de N. F., 1649, p. 30.