

1650. the Fathers should put themselves at their head, unite all the dispersed Hurons who could be got together, and lead them to Quebec, where, under the protection of the French fort, and of their father, Ononthio, they could peacefully cultivate the lands that might be assigned to them, and where they would only think of employing in God's service the days that were spared to them.¹

Emigrate to
Quebec.

Before replying, Father Ragueneau wished to consult the other missionaries who were in the neighborhood, and all agreed with the Indians. This seemed, in fact, the only resource left to this ill-starred people. All the country was in the utmost consternation. Nothing was to be seen but towns destroyed or abandoned, already beginning to swarm with wild beasts, whose place in the forests and mountains the men, women, and children had gone to occupy. There was not, indeed, a moment to lose, if they wished to save the sad remnants of a nation once so flourishing.²

They accordingly began their march³ without further deliberation, and without very well knowing how to live by the way; but famine stared them equally in the face if they remained in the island or the woods. The danger, too, of falling into the hands of some Iroquois party was equally great; for it is true that the smallest force of warriors would have sufficed to cut to pieces all this confused multitude, panic-stricken and reduced, by hardships and disease, to extreme weakness. They chose the route by the great river of the Outouais; and although fresh trails of Iroquois were met day by day,⁴ they were so fortunate as to escape being discovered by those savages. About midway these poor exiles met Father Bressani, who,

¹ Relation de la Nouvelle France, 1650, p. 24; Creuxius, *Historia Canadensis*, p. 585; Bressani, *Breve Relatione*, p. 126.

² Relation de la Nouvelle France, 1650, p. 25; Creuxius, *Historia Canadensis*, p. 586.

³ They left St. Joseph's Island, June 10, 1650—Bressani (*Breve Relatione*) says, in May. They reached Quebec, July 28, 1650: *Relation de la Nouvelle France*, 1650, p. 28.

⁴ The country was almost a desert: *Relation*, 1650, p. 26.