

1653. One day, when they were assembled to deliberate on his fate and that of his companion, a woman presented a branch of wampum,¹ to obtain permission to cut off one of His sufferings. his fingers; and having secured it, an Indian approached the missionary and took his right hand. While he was examining his fingers, one after the other, the missionary, who had a presentiment that he would not be put to death, asked the Almighty that his left rather than his right hand should be mutilated. The Indian instantly dropped the hand which he held, took up the other, and made a boy cut off the forefinger. During the operation the servant of God chanted the *Vexilla*; and at its close, the branch of wampum was hung around his neck, and his finger given to the woman who had solicited it.²

The next day he was led from village to village,³ and everywhere had much to suffer, especially from the young, to whom he was abandoned, and who treated him with more than barbarous petulance. At last a council was held, which decided to burn the young Frenchman, and put the missionary at the discretion of an old matron, whose brother had been captured or slain. The young Frenchman was at once executed, but Poncet's mistress spared his life.⁴ Three days after, an Iroquois came from Three Rivers, and reported that they were on the point of concluding peace; that Ononthio demanded, as a preliminary, the liberation of Father Poncet; and that it had been necessary to give him hostages, whose lives depended

tre, Sept. 6, 1653; Creuxius, *Historia Canadensis*, p. 673; Belmont, *Histoire du Canada*, p. 7.

¹ A branch of wampum is a long thread, on which several beads of wampum are strung.—*Charlevoix*. The wampum, or clam-shell beads, are called by Charlevoix, as by earlier French writers, *porcelaine*, apparently from their resemblance to the porcelain beads which had long

been made in France for the trade on the coast of Africa. The expression, *branche de porcelaine*, corresponds, apparently, to the *fathom of wampum* of early New York writers.

² *Relation de la Nouvelle France*, 1653, pp. 10-12.

³ Poncet mentions but one of the villages.

⁴ *Relation de la Nouvelle France*, 1653, p. 14.