

1637. and not only lost all fear that the French would interfere with their driving their enemies to the wall, but, in the month of August, 1637, five hundred of these Indians had the boldness to come and insult the governor at Three Rivers, where he was, and carry off before his eyes, without his being able to prevent it, thirty Hurons coming down to Quebec with a load of furs.¹

Epidemic
among the
Hurons.

The year 1638 began with the Huron missionaries in a way to give hopes of harvest abundant enough to atone for the sterility of previous years. The country was visited by an epidemic, which from one town soon spread to all, and threatened the destruction of the whole nation. It was a kind of dysentery, which, in a few days, hurried to the grave all whom it attacked. The French were no more exempt than the Indians, but they all recovered. This produced two good effects: first, those Indians were undeceived who persisted in believing that every accident that befell them was caused by witchcraft: this they could not ascribe to the missionaries, seeing that even they did not escape the malady: second, that the Indians learned to treat the sick better than they had done, observing that the French easily recovered by means of the treatment they adopted; for skilful as these people are in curing wounds and fractures, they are unable to treat internal diseases, which require attention and experience in the physician, with patience and docility in the patient. Finally, the charity and generosity with which they beheld the missionaries part with all their remaining remedies and palliatives to relieve them, and the surprising cures they effected, gained the hearts of those even who till then had been loudest in their opposition.²

¹ Relation de la Nouvelle France, 1637, pp. 88, 89; Creuxius, *Historia Canadensis*.

² Relat. de la Nouv. France, 1638, pp. 32-59. The year 1637 was the time of their great persecution, in

which Father Brebeuf gave, after the Indian fashion, his *atsataion* (death-banquet): Relation, 1638, p. 44. The following Relation (1639) does not altogether justify the progress here indicated.