

[193] Letter from Father Joseph Marie Chaumonot,
to the Very Reverend Father Mutio Vitelleschi,
General of the Society of Jesus, at Rome.

(Translated from the Italian original preserved at Rome.)

KÉBEC, August 7, 1639.

MY VERY REVEREND FATHER,
Pax Christi.

I arrived in New France, on the first of August, with Fathers Vimont¹⁹ and Poncet²⁰ and one of our lay Brothers, after a voyage of three months, which was very difficult on account of the fogs which surrounded us for three weeks, with the danger of being wrecked against the enormous masses of ice that float upon these seas. The ship of the commandant of the fleet was about to strike against one of these blocks of ice, on the day of the Holy Trinity, while mass was being said; when one of the sailors, walking upon the bridge, perceived, in spite of the thickness of the fog, the glitter of the ice, which was no more than two brasses away, and cried, "Mercy, mercy! we are all lost!" Father Vimont made a vow to say two masses, one in honor of the blessed Virgin, the other [194] in honor of saint Joseph, if they preserved us from this peril. And lo! at that very moment, the wind suddenly changed direction and caused us to avoid, as if by a miracle, this imminent danger. The most skillful pilots agree that this could naturally not have been done with so much