

hurt, and no one lost his life; one Huron alone had his hand pierced through, and our canoes were broken in several places. We were four French,—one of whom, being in the rear, escaped with the Hurons, who abandoned him before [61] approaching the enemy. Eight or ten, both Christians and Catechumens, joined us; having been made to say a brief prayer, they oppose a courageous front to the enemy; and although the latter were thirty men against twelve or fourteen, our people valiantly sustained their effort. But, having perceived that another band—of forty Hiroquois, who were in ambush on the other shore of the river—was coming to attack them, they lost courage; insomuch that those who were least entangled fled, abandoning their comrades in the fight. A Frenchman named René Goupil, whose death is precious before God, being no longer sustained by those who followed him, was surrounded and captured, along with some of the most courageous Hurons. I was watching this disaster,” says the Father, “from a place very favorable for concealing me from the sight of the enemy, being able to hide myself in thickets and among very tall and dense reeds; but this thought could never enter my mind. ‘Could I, indeed,’ I said to myself, ‘abandon our French and leave those good Neophytes and those poor Catechumens, without giving them [62] the help which the Church of my God has entrusted to me?’ Flight seemed horrible to me; ‘It must be,’ I said in my heart, ‘that my body suffer the fire of earth, in order to deliver these poor souls from the flames of Hell; it must die a transient death, in order to procure for them an eternal life.’ My conclusion being reached without great opposition from my