

PREFACE TO VOL. XXXV

Following is a synopsis of the documents contained in the present volume:

LXXII. This is a letter from Ragueneau to the father general, dated in the Huron country, March 13, 1650. In it is depicted in vivid colors the distress and misery into which the Huron nation has been plunged. Since the last *Relation*, two more Jesuits have fallen at their posts,—Charles Garnier and Noël Chabanel. The little Huron church is scattered in every direction, the country being devastated by war, famine, and pestilence. So great is the famine that cannibalism prevails, and corpses are dug from the graves for food. In the midst of their afflictions, the people seek instruction and baptism from the missionaries, as never before. The latter — “as good shepherds, following their flock” — have abandoned their house of Ste. Marie, and established a new residence on St. Joseph (now Christian) Island, that they may minister to the Hurons who have fled thither. Here they make a fresh clearing in the forest, and build homes; and, besides, construct fortifications for defense, should the Iroquois attack them. Hardest of all is to clear the ground from stumps, and plant it with seed. They have brought supplies of food and live stock from Ste. Marie, and have aided their disciples with their reserves of Indian corn. Notwithstanding their hardships, all