

PREFACE TO VOL. XIV

The greater part of Le Mercier's (Huron) contribution to the *Relation* of 1637 (Document XXIX.) was presented in our Vol. XIII. We now give the remainder of the Huron report, which thus closes the entire document.

Le Mercier continues his record of missionary labors among the plague-stricken Hurons, — nursing the sick, consoling the afflicted, and baptizing dying children and those adults who at the point of death turned to this rite as a protection from the fires of hell. In the intervals of these labors, the Fathers learn what they can of the native language, "all the secret of which," says the author, "consists in the conjugations of verbs." In this they are greatly aided by "some catechisms prepared for them last year by Louis de Sainte-Foy, upon the mysteries of the life, death, and passion of Our Lord."

In March, the missionaries submit to some of the clans certain questions — whether they are ready to believe in and accept the faith; whether they are willing that some of the Frenchmen should become allied to them by marriage; and if there is any probability of the reunion of the natives hereabout to those of the Bear clan, from whom they had become estranged. The second of these queries is readily answered in the affirmative; but they hesitate as to the others.