

BURNING OF THE URSULINE CONVENT,  
QUEBEC, 1650.

BY H. H. MILES, LL.D., D.C.L.



AN event in which the whole colony felt the deepest concern, occurred in the night of December 30, 1650, was the burning of the Ursuline Convent. Full accounts of it are given in the History of the Ursulines of Quebec and also in the Jesuit Relations. Although it began after all had retired to rest, and, by its suddenness and violence, compelled the inmates to escape as they best could, in their night-clothes, yet no lives were lost. The weather at the time was intensely cold, and the ground covered with snow. The Ursulines lost all they had. They were afterwards encouraged to rebuild, instead of returning to France. The other religious bodies, as well as M. d'Aillebout, assisted them in doing so with loans of money, and their credit. The Governor himself and Madame d'Aillebout furnished the design or plans; and the former, as temporal father of the community, did all he could towards the restoration of their useful establishment.

One of the most touching incidents connected with the disaster of the Ursulines occurred a short time after the fire, when they were temporarily lodged in the Hotel Dieu, where the *Hospitalieres* received them with the utmost kindness and charity. Proofs of sympathy had reached them from every quarter—all classes of the French and the Indians combining to manifest the concern so universally entertained. But the poor Hurons, who then occupied at least 400 cabins in the neighbourhood of the hospital, excelled others in this respect. They held a council, and finding that their utmost wealth consisted in the possession of two *percelain collars*, each composed of 1200 grains or rings, they resolved to go in a body to the Hotel Dieu, and offer these as a present, along with their condolences. Their chief, *Taieronk*, made