

Album of Saint Anne

THE DEVOTION TO SAINT ANNE IN CANADA

VI. The heroic age

THE heroic age of Canada, comprises the fifty years following the foundation of Quebec (1): years of struggle and glory for the country, but also years marked by bloodshed. Who can ever estimate the cost of each triumph of the faith and of colonization over the naturalism and barbarism of the natives? How many heroes have dyed with their blood the field of their exploits!

The devil angered by the happy fruits produced by the missions among the savages, made every effort to destroy them, or at least to impede their progress.

The natural ferocity of the Iroquois served him admirably in his designs; he therefore united all the forces of that warlike nation and hurled them with impetuosity and fury against the most-peaceful tribe of the Hurons. The shock was terrible, but fatal to the latter, who lost the bulk of their army. Five apostles: Father Daniel, de Brebeuf, G. Lallemant, Garnier and Chabanel were enveloped in the massacre and shed their blood on the soil already bathed with their sweat. All the Huron villages were attacked and carried one after the other; their inhabitants were killed and carried off into captivity and their houses pillaged and burned. Everywhere fire and sword; desolation and death.

The missionaries no longer had any occupation in a country thus devastated and returned to Quebec. Father Ragueau who had the gift of languages, would not leave without endeavouring to save the remnants of the population. But all his efforts resulted solely in gathering together three or four hundred of the former inhabitants and with them he started.

(1) Ferland. History of Canada, I. p. 501.