

for two families, the smoke escaping through the narrow opening left in the top of the house. Picture such a house, especially in the winter or festal season. "He who entered beheld a strange spectacle, the vista of fire lighting the smoky concave, the bronzed groups encircling each other, eating, gambling or amusing themselves with idle gossip; shrivelled squaws, hideous with three-score years of hardships, grisly old warriors scarred with Iroquois war clubs, young aspirants whose honours were yet to be won, damsels gay with ochre and wampum, restless children pellmell with restless dogs, covered with fleas." Such was the fifty to one hundred houses and homes that constituted the Huron village. As mentioned, the principal towns were fixed, but frequently the smaller, those unprotected, were moved to a new site, this taking place when wood became scarce, the soil exhausted or the location insanitary. Obviously this accounts for so many village sites being found throughout the county of Simcoe.

Champlain found the Hurons farmers, fishermen, traders and hunters. They did not rely upon hunting to maintain themselves. They were upon a higher level in this respect than the Algonquins who roamed the northern forests. They raised crops, corn, beans, pumpkins, hemp and sunflower, the latter being produced for the oil with which the men and women smeared themselves for sacrificial purposes. The Petuns added tobacco to the crops, hence the name, and just here let it be interjected that though it then grew luxuriantly, it is now raised only as an ornamental plant and with the greatest care. Corn was the chiefest crop and was the main article of food. It was a hard, flinty corn, with bluish kernel, and similar to that grown to-day on the Grand River Reserve. Oil for food was secured from fish, and the hemp was grown for fishing-nets and cords. For clothing, what little was worn was obtained by trapping the beaver, otter and other fur-bearing animals. In the summer

the men were nearly naked and the women were also scantily clad, while in the winter, despite the rigours of the weather, they added but little more. Being thoroughly acclimatized by their continuous outdoor life, they apparently failed to feel the need of coverings to protect the body against the blasts of winter.

The family life of the Hurons was not ideal. The nation was dissolute and licentious. The construction of the houses did not tend to privacy or modesty. The men were "lords of creation", and the women, as Champlain expressed it, their mules. To the men fell the task of building the houses and making weapons, pipes and canoes. The summer and autumn were their seasons of serious employment—the winter their season of leisure and feasting, in neither of which were they ever excelled by the white man. To the women fell all the other work, the gathering of the year's supply of firewood, the sowing, tilling and harvesting of the crops, smoking fish, dressing skins, making cordage and the scanty clothing and preparing food. On the march she bore the burden. Female life among the Hurons had no bright side. It was a youth of licence and an age of drudgery.

The men, like other Indians, were desperate gamblers, staking all ornaments, clothing, canoes, pipes, weapons and wives. At times they gambled individually, at others, one village challenged another, and to such a length is it recorded by one of the Fathers, that once in mid-winter with the snow nearly three feet deep, the men of a village returned without leggings and barefooted, yet, being good losers, in the best of humour.

Dancing and feasts were also great factors in the life of the Hurons. They were of various characters, social, medical and mystical, or religious. Whole villages were invited on festal occasions, the invitation being simply, "come and eat", and come and eat they did. To refuse was a grave offence. Invitations similarly whole-