

THE STORY OF THE HURONS.

the *manitous*, and all the brood of anomalous devils who reigned with undisputed sway in these wild realms of darkness. The brave friar, a true soldier of the Church, had led his forlorn hope into the fastnesses of hell; and now, with contented heart, he might depart in peace, for he had said the first mass in the country of the Hurons."

The Hurons at the time of Champlain's visit occupied the district on the southeastern shore of Georgian Bay, lying between Matchedash Bay, Nottawasaga Bay, Lake Simcoe and Lake Couchiching. They were a numerous and powerful people, second only to the Iroquois in strength, in numbers and in methods of organization and government. They lived in villages and towns, many of them strongly fortified, and as early French writers estimate the population variously, it is inferred that migrations took place from time to time. Champlain estimates the number of villages as seventeen or eighteen, with the population at about ten thousand; but Brébeuf, twenty years later, found twenty villages and about 30,000 souls. In 1639