

1. The first series of influences (commercial intercourse and religious preaching) exerted themselves over the ancient Hurons previous to their leaving their old abode in Western Ontario. Commerce introduced into the Huron villages by the early French discoverers, or, at least, greatly developed by them, upset the balance of the traditional system of labour of the Hurons, by reducing the relative importance of agriculture as a means of livelihood for them. Thereby the Hurons were rendered less sedentary, more nomadic, less apt to fortify their villages and to hold the country against invaders. The young and able-bodied men were kept much away from home by their hunting and trading expeditions, leaving the towns insufficiently protected against attack, while themselves heavily laden with furs or other goods, but scantily equipped with arms and ammunition, fell an easy prey to Iroquois war parties.

Again, commerce, by reducing the importance of agriculture in the labour system of the Hurons, weakened the clan organisation, on which the whole Wyandot social fabric rested. Female clanship was dependent for its strength on the social prestige of the women; and this in turn was largely dependent on the development of agriculture, which was left to their charge.¹ The preaching of the new religious dogmas by the Recollet and Jesuit missionaries and the conversion to the faith of a number of the Hurons also tended to undo the binding action of clanship. For clanship in its origin was blended with the religious beliefs of these primitive people; each clan was under the special protection of a pagan myth, and the preaching of the Gospel released the hold which these myths had on the minds of the Hurons. In that way were the strong family ties which bound together the scattered parts of the Wyandot confederacy loosened, and the Hurons rendered less capable of strong united action. In that way were the Iroquois enabled to defeat one after the other the disconnected groups and bring about the utter dispersal of the Huron nation. Such is the social significance of the facts set forth in the early accounts.²

Of the five or six tribes, or subordinate nations, which made up the Wyandot confederacy, only three (the nation of the Bear, that of the Rock, and that of the Rope) repaired towards Quebec. A few years later two of these tribes were forced by the Mohawks and the Onondagas to join their respective nations; and the nation of the Rope was finally the only one to remain with the French.³ From this sole tribe, very much disorganised and reduced in numbers, and still further reduced by subsequent wars, did the present Lorette community spring.

2. The physical features of the country about and back of Quebec, characterised by the restricted area of the arable belt and the development of the mountain and forest tract, had the effect of keeping the small Huron group away from agriculture, of turning it more completely towards the chase and those industries dependent on the chase and the forest for their raw material. Thereby the Hurons were prevented from acquiring any greater fitness for heavy and steady labour, and from developing any greater ability or desire to hold land.

3. The close neighbourhood and competition of the white settlers had two quite distinct effects on the Hurons. On the one hand, their influence

¹ P. de Rousiers, *La Science Sociale*, 1890, vol. x. p. 141.

² Champplain, iv. pp. 43, 44, 101; *Jesuit Relations*, Quebec edition, 1642, pp. 55, 56; Charlevoix, vol. i. p. 201.

³ *Jesuit Relations*, 1657, pp. 20 and 23.