

## SURVEY OF THE VILLAGE SITES.

In the pages which follow will be found some particulars about the Indian remains in two representative townships of the Huron territory—Flos and Vespra. As these are the concluding reports in a series covering the antiquities of seven townships once inhabited by the Hurons, it will be appropriate to say a few words in this place about the origin of the undertaking, the methods of working, the course and results of the work of survey, and the reports thereon now brought to completion.

When the writer first undertook the task of collecting notes describing the village sites, he had no idea that there had really been so large a number of village sites in the comparatively small territory between Lake Simcoe and Georgian Bay. He was fully aware, from the histories of the first half of the seventeenth century, that not a few villages must have existed. But the number he has located has surpassed any expectation he had at first, and has rendered the work a larger task than he had anticipated. In the previous reports on five townships, 273 sites came under review, while in the present two reports, 97 more are added. In addition to these, several others have come to my notice in the townships previously described, since the publication of the reports thereon, thus bringing the aggregate to a little more than 400. And it is not improbable that these are only one-half of the sites which really exist. In size, the sites range from two or three camps to towns covering fifteen acres; not by any means all occupied at once, but at different times, as the result of more or less shifting from place to place while the Huron nation dwelt in the territory. But a proportion of the sites were not Huron villages, and belonged to other times, all of which further complicated the task not a little.

Next to the actual location of as many of the village sites as could be found, it was important to acquire and record a general idea of the physical features and natural productions of the country in which the Hurons lived. This branch of the enquiry solves many problems and questions as to their occupation of the district, and shows their *habitat* to have been the hilliest tract in the centre of the small interlake peninsula. They prove to have been veritable Montagnais, or mountaineers, as well as agriculturists, entirely different in their mode of life from the nomadic Algonquins, who followed the rivers and lakes, camping mostly on the shores.

Then, to know something of the positions and courses of the early trails has not been the least of the advantages gained by the survey. For a white man to set out on the right trail, when the country was all covered with woods, and keep on it, he required Indian guides, who were alone to be depended on for such work. Champlain had Indian guides, and often the missionaries, who succeeded him, had also these necessary companions. Our survey, by unravelling the courses of the trails, considerably narrows down the problem of what routes Champlain and the missionaries actually took in their pioneer expeditions.

It has further become evident from this survey that the early sites are in the southerly townships, while the later ones are in the northerly townships; and that for the most part they all represent one continuous series. It was to this locality, protected as it is by water on nearly all of its sides, that during the wars with the Iroquois, (as the Jesuit Relations inform us), great numbers of the aborigines flocked from the more exposed parts of Ontario.