

NATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND MIGRATIONS OF
THE HURONS AS INDICATED BY THEIR
REMAINS IN NORTH SIMCOE.

BY A. F. HUNTER, M.A.

(Read 25th September, 1891).

The tract of land lying between Lake Simcoe and Georgian Bay is commonly known as the abode of the Huron Indians during the first half of the seventeenth century. But, to describe their location more definitely, it was on the high ground of the interior of this tract that they chiefly dwelt, as appears from their remains found at the present day; in the low parts of the wide valley of the Nottawasaga River, between them and the Tobacco Nation, very few traces of aboriginal occupation are found. It will be proper to lay special emphasis on the fact that the Hurons occupied high ground, because in this respect they contrast in a striking manner with the later Algonquins, who subsequently occupied the same district but preferred to haunt the waterways during the greater part of the year, and were naturally an aquatic people. Corresponding with this difference between the Hurons and Algonquins in the choice of locality, there was a similar contrast between their places of burial—so marked indeed that it is still impossible to confuse them. The Hurons selected places for burial purposes near their villages, almost always in dry and sandy soil, and remote from water. Of all their ossuaries brought to light in this century, only a few have been found where the soil is clay. But the Algonquins buried their dead near the river banks and lake shores, in places which they could easily reach in canoes.

The almost complete annihilation of the Hurons at their own villages in 1649, has been the most notable event in connection with the history of their race. It is possible to see at the present day the very spots where the massacres took place; these are indicated by large numbers of iron tomahawks strewn the ground, besides other marks of strife which are still visible. In Indian warfare, tomahawks were often hurled at the enemy—a practice that has been noted by Catlin [*Life Among the Indians*, chap. 2.] and other writers. Hence we now find patches of ground where they are found in abundance. On the accompanying map of North Simcoe there is defined the district in which these patches