

HURON VILLAGE SITES.

BY ANDREW F. HUNTER, M.A.

POSITION OF THE HURON TRIBES AMONG THE ABORIGINES.

On the Dry Hills, in the northeasterly parts of Simcoe County, Ontario, the Huron tribes dwelt in well organized communities until their dispersion by the Iroquois in 1649-50. These tribes were near neighbors of various Algonquian tribes, who were the true natives of the forest belt. As a factor in the separation of different kinds of Indians from each other, the great North American forest played an important part in the geographical distribution of plants and animals, as well as of man. And while the Hurons naturally came under the influence of their Algonquian neighbors of the forests, and were like them in some ways, yet in many respects they resembled the Siouan tribes of the grassy plains in the west. Briefly stated, the Hurons were allied in blood to the Algonquians, but in language and some of their social institutions and usages transmitted by speech, they were allied to the Siouan tribes. And as they bore some resemblances to both of these peoples, it will be necessary to examine in detail some of their affinities with each one. First, then, let us speak of their relationship with the Algonquian tribes.

SOME AFFINITIES OF THE HURONS AND ALGONQUIAN TRIBES.

The forest tribes lived in lesser bands than the Indians of the plains, and, like all other communities in a low stage of barbarism, or with a low grade of civilization, they roved in the woods and along the streams as their necessities required. Under such conditions the villages of Algonquians were naturally small. The Hurons, on the other hand, lived in communities that were slightly larger, yet to a considerable degree their villages resembled in size those of Algonquians, except those which belonged to the years immediately before the close of the historic period, when they were compelled from danger to gather into larger villages resembling in size those of the Sioux. The Recollet and Jesuit missionaries saw prospects of doing better work among the populous, sedentary and agricultural Hurons, than among the nomadic Algonquian tribes, and accordingly opened missions in the remote Huron country in the very earliest years of their labors. Iroquois villages also occupied a middle position between Algonquian and Sioux in the matter of size, but upon the whole had larger villages than Hurons, and hence fewer of them in proportion to the whole population.

Huron myths and superstitious beliefs and practices, as given in the Jesuit Relations, though sometimes very meagrely, were closely akin to those of the modern Algonquian tribes of the same parts. The medicine-man, or "sorcerer," as the Jesuits called him, was the central figure of Huron paganism, as with Algonquian peoples generally. On the other hand, communal dances and ceremonies filled a larger place in the programme of Iroquois rites, although the public feasts were not by any means absent from the traditional practices of the Hurons. Here, again, in an altogether different connection, the Iroquois verged upon the Sioux more closely than did the Hurons.

In decorative as well as useful arts, and attainments in the skilful use of canoes, there were various resemblances between Hurons and the Algon-