

marking here, that the uniformity on this point which prevailed throughout the whole nation, and those sprung from it, at the time of the discovery of Canada, is a proof that if the three families are not branches of the same stem, their union is at least of very high antiquity, and dates anterior to the separation of the Iroquois and Hurons.

The country occupied by the Hurons at the beginning of the last century, had Lake Erie on the south, Lake Huron on the west, and Lake Ontario on the east. It is situated between the forty-second and forty-fifth degrees of north latitude.¹ There was quite a number of towns, and the whole nation comprised from forty to fifty thousand souls, although even then greatly diminished by its wars with the Iroquois. This country is not, generally speaking, the most fertile in all New France, but there are districts extremely so; and if it was sufficiently peopled, as our best provinces are, it would easily, if well cultivated, support all the inhabitants. Moreover, the air there is very healthy. We long kept quite a number of Frenchmen there, who suffered much from hunger and other hardships incident to war, but not one died of disease, and very few in fact were sick.

There are extensive prairies there which would bear wheat and all other grains that might be sowed; the forests are full of very fine trees, especially cedars of prodigious size, and high in proportion. The country is well irrigated, and the water is very good. There are stones there, it is said, that melt like metal, and have some veins of silver; but I do not know how much credit is to be given to what we read in some Relations about two sin-

1634.

Extent and
nature of
the Huron
country.

¹ This is too great an extent for the Huron country. Sagard (Grand Voyage, p. 113) and Bressani (Breve Relatione, p. 5) put it $44\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ N. In the Relation of 1639 (p. 50) Father Jerome Lalemant puts it at $45\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$, and says that their country was twenty or twenty-five leagues long by seven

or eight wide. Brebeuf (Relation, 1635, p. 33) says: "It is not large; its longest extent may be traversed in three or four days." Du Creux, in his map, locates it exactly. Father Martin and Mr. Taché have explored it accurately, and identified most of the village sites.