

through the gloomy pine forests of old Huronia, the mourners uttering, at intervals, dismal wailing cries, supposed to resemble those of disembodied spirits wending their way to the land of souls, and thought to have a soothing effect on the consciousness still residing in the bundles of bones, which each man carried.

The Jesuits had been invited, by the chiefs of the Nation of the Bear, to come to Ossossané and witness the rite. This great town of the Hurons lay some distance back from the eastern margin of Nottawassaga Bay, in the midst of a pine forest. What a sight it must have been to those Europeans, as, one after another, the weird funeral corteges, converging from the various towns of the Bear, issued from the surrounding forest.

During the delay, in awaiting the complete assemblage of the nation's dead, the squaws ladled out food for the inevitable feast, while the younger members of both sexes contended for prizes, donated by mourners in honor of departed relatives. So great was the assemblage that the houses were crowded to suffocation and large numbers had to camp out, in the adjacent forest. The bundles of dead were hung from the cross-poles in the houses, and in the one where the Jesuits were housed upwards of one hundred packages of mortality decorated the interior of the building. The Jesuits passed the night in one of these places, and endured the ordeal with Christian fortitude.

Finally, the signal was given, by the chiefs, for the consummation of the concluding rite. The packages of dead were opened and tears and lamentations lavished upon their contents. Brébeuf refers to one woman in particular, whose ecstasies of grief, over the bones of her father and children, were pathetic in the extreme. She combed her father's hair, and fondled his bones as if they had been alive. She made bracelets of beads for the arms of her children, and bathed their bones with her tears. It was the same divine light of motherhood, which thus irradiated the savage dens of the Hurons, as that which shines in the eyes of the Christian mother, as she weeps over the cold form of one whose brows have been sealed with the sign of the Cross.

The various processions now re-formed and proceeded to a spot in the forest, where a clearing of several acres had been made. In the centre of this open space a huge pit had been dug, ten feet in depth and thirty feet in diameter. Around this pit a rude scaffold had been erected, very high and strong. Above this scaffold rose a number of upright poles with others crossed between; upon which to hang the funeral gifts and remains of the dead.

The different groups of mourners were assigned places around the edge of the clearing. The funeral gifts were now