

THE NEUTRAL NATIONS.

THE ERIES.

Read before the Hamilton Scientific Association

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"Who then lives to mourn us? None.
What marks our extermination? Nothing."—SENECA.

"Not Hindoo, Afgan, Cushite or Parsee.
The Indian his own prototype must be."

The occupants of the shores of this lake by the ancient and extinct tribe of the Eries, who were once the acknowledged pacificators of the neighboring Indians, and who preceded the Iroquois in warlike and civic power within that basin, gives a melancholy interest to whatever in the existing archaeological remains of the country, serves to restore the memory of their power.

They appear to have been in the plenitude of pre-eminence and of a civilized strength and influence at the period of the first discoveries of the French in the beginning of the seventeenth century. The Wyandot-Hurons at that time had not been disturbed from the possession of their ancient territories on the shores and valley of the St. Lawrence. The Eries seem to possess unique claim to remembrance, which cannot be urged by any other American tribe—a claim still older than the days of Hiawatha, viz.: that of kindling the Council Fires of Peace for all the tribes of the continent.

According to the French Missionaries, the Eries were at the head of the *singular league known as the Neutral Nations*. Their territory extended from the extreme west to the eastern shores of Lake Erie, including the Niagara valley, and of whom the Káu-Kuas, of Seneca fame and tradition, were manifestly only one of the powers. The dispersion of the Eries, according to European writers, took place in 1656; according to Cusick that event occurred at the time of Cabot.

The following facts are well authenticated: The Neutres kept their neutrality until 1634; they had 36 villages in 1641 and a gar-