

*An Organization of the Scientific Investigation of the Indian Place-nomenclature of the Maritime Provinces of Canada.*

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The aboriginal place-nomenclature of any country, rendered distinctive, as it usually is, by both music and mystery, will always possess a great charm for a large number of people. It thus offers an exceptional opportunity, of which local historians have only rarely taken full advantage, to tie history to geography and thereby give a more vivid interest to local archæology and annals. Its thorough study, however, is beset with many difficulties, for which reason the imagination has great scope, and tends to warp, as in history generally, the facts to fit the fancy. Therefore, much error is current which, however agreeable, it is the duty of the historian to replace by truth, however unpleasing. The subject is one which, from all points of view, is worthy of scientific investigation; and this I propose to attempt to give it, so far as concerns the Maritime Provinces of Canada, in this article and some others to follow. The effort seems the more worth while for the reason that a beginning and organization once made may form a basis upon which others may build in the remaining parts of the Dominion.

There are three stages in the progress of knowledge of this subject.

I. THE CONVENTIONAL STAGE.—In this the forms and interpretations of Indian place-names given by authorities popularly considered the best are accepted without question, and if authorities differ, then there is general acceptance of the forms which are most pleasing to the imagination. But in fact even the explanations given by the best authorities commonly have much the same origin, viz., a selection of the most pleasing from among many possibilities. This is the stage of common local belief, popular guide books, tourist literature, newspaper lists of local place-names, and even of the general historical works.

II. THE INTERROGATIONAL STAGE.—In this the attempt is made to collect all of the available forms and interpretations of the words, and such other information as bears upon the subject; then any agreement exhibited by the data is accepted without further analysis as expressing the truth, or the probable truth. This is the stage of the most of the works devoted especially to Place-nomenclature, and is represented in Canada by Rouillard's *Noms Géographiques de la Province de Québec et*

