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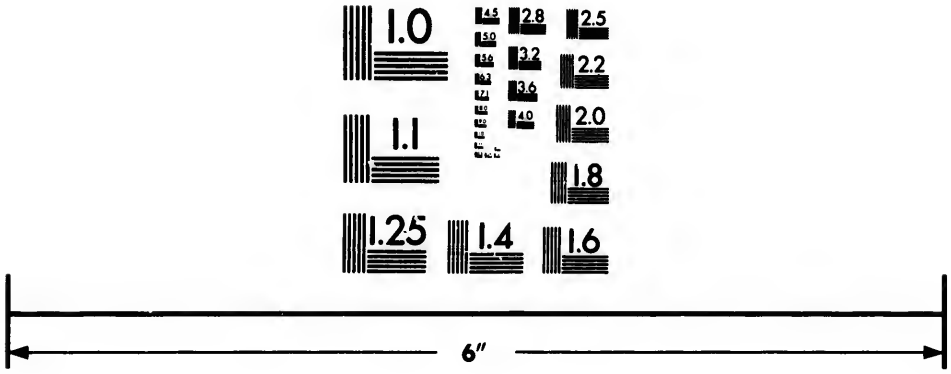

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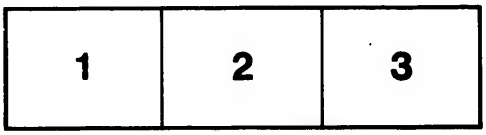

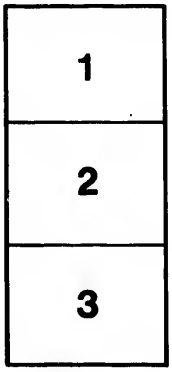

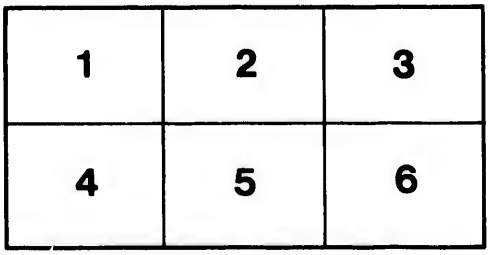

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PROCEEDINGS

AT A

MEETING

OF

THE INHABITANTS OF THE TOWNSHIPS

OF

HOPE AND HAMILTON,

IN THE DISTRICT

OF

NEWCASTLE, U. C.

HELD AGREEABLE TO NOTICE

FROM

ROBERT GOURLAY.

YORK, U. C.

PRINTED BY R. C. HORNE.

1818.

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DEDICATION.

TO those, whose minds have not entirely discarded the loftiest principles of Honor and Magnanimity; who ardently contemplate the rising glory of this country;—and, in whose nature, are happily united, Patriotism, Virtue and Sensibility:

To such characters, a notice of the following proceedings is offered, without any formality of introduction.

PROCEEDINGS, &c.

AFTER a great deal of unconnected, and, sometimes incoherent matter, which occasioned Mr. Gourlay a long and painful delivery of nearly three hours, which was listened to with no small degree of impatience by a numerous and very respectable meeting of the inhabitants and landholders, of the Townships of Hope and Hamilton. Mr. Fothergill rose in reply, and began by apologizing to the older inhabitants, for the liberty he was about to take, and craving their indulgence for having come amongst them wholly unprepared for such an encounter, which the nature of his many avocations did not permit; then, turning towards Mr. G—, with much animation he observed:

"As to Mr. Gourlay himself, I would remark, that every man who has actually become a public character or may be aiming at that distinction, has *two characters*—a *public* and a *private* one. It cannot be supposed, that I am acquainted with Mr. G's privacy in the more obscure paths of life. I

have no desire to be acquainted with it. It is his public conduct, alone, in this country, that I would scrutinize, because this is my right, and the right, gentlemen, of all. The moment a private individual starts from the great mass of society and endeavors to elevate himself, into greater notice than belongs to him, he is a fair object of animadversion; if, as an elegant writer of modern times has judiciously remarked, any vain or foolish individual, proud of his person and accomplishments, *will* jump upon the pedestal of APOLLO, and place himself in the attitude of that fabled deity, he ought not to be surprised should he be examined and criticised by the strictest rules of grace and proportion. I premise thus much, because I wish to speak freely of this man's proceedings in public. And I must confess to you, gentlemen, that it is a sense of duty, which brings me this day amongst you, unprepared and unaccustomed as I am to speak in large and mixed assemblies. It is but lately I have been called to a seat in the Bench of Magistrates. I tell you this from no impulse of vanity—from no feeling of arrogance—but I tell it you, because I have *sworn* to keep the peace in this fine, this extensive, and happy District. From my soul, gentlemen, I believe that that peace is in danger—and an oath is a solemn, a sacred thing.

" These proceedings of Mr. Gourlay's, are not only in my mind a breach of the peace, but a glaring insult to the gentry, and native good sense of the country. The Americans, as a nation, are remarkable for their quickness of perception, their shrewdness, and their sagacity;—many of you, gentlemen, have American blood in your veins: the British, as you well know, are not less celebrated, for their love of liberty, and their hatred of

tyranny and oppression—in whatever shape those foul fiends may appear; as well as for their high carriage and loftiness of demeanor, even in situations of the greatest danger; and for their unconquerable spirit in asserting their rights and supporting and defending their liberty, when infringed upon.—Is it not then insulting to a society constituted of such parts, to be told that we can neither see, nor remove, the accumulated burthens which are said to be heaping upon us?—Good God, gentlemen, are we all blind, all deaf, all stupified by the heavy load of our grievances, and so totally benighted in the thick gloom of political darkness, as to be insensible of what is passing around us! This man, daringly tells you of his *surprise, that you have been patient so long! he is certain that you cannot be quiet much longer; and advises you immediately to come forward and send delegates*,—to do what? why to insult your Governor, to controul your Parliament, and finally, in all human probability—could this strange and wandering patriot have his will—to revolutionize this great and magnificent Country. Yet, gentlemen, this is all quite harmless—this is no excitement to discontent and disorder—no attempt to make you dissatisfied with your excellent Government—no endeavour to disturb your domestic peace!—If the attempts of this man are not of a seditious nature—the seeds which he scatters amongst you, are from a tree not less baneful, he conjures up a set of ideal and frightful forms, and fashions them out of the fumes and vapours of his own wild, vain, and feverish imagination, in order to terrify the weak and uninformed, and then to profit by their terror. Because he has been personally disappointed in the bounty of government, he would be revenged—deeply revenged, and he would make you, gentlemen, the instrument of

that revenge.—Depend upon it, he has less at heart your wrongs, whether real or pretended, than his own assumed rights..

This is the most indulgent light in which we can regard his conduct. But he is exciting you to insult your King—in the person of your august Governor ; for, that your Governor *is* the noble representative of your Sovereign, you *must* know, and you are well assured that he has been chosen for his high merits, and, on account of the splendour of his career in the service of his Country ; you know also, that this illustrious person has already given us the highest hopes in regard to the future prosperity of this beautiful and happy Province, under his auspices.—Is it possible, then, that you can deliberately stain your character by offering *such* an insult at the instigation of one whom you know not ?—Oh I am sure you will spurn at the idea, and regard the instigator in the light he deserves. Next, gentlemen, he wants to set up a new and controuling power over your Parliament, whom he has already stigmatized, in the grossest manner. The proceedings of this man, indeed, too much resemble the measures adopted by the disaffected, both in France and England, at the fatal period of the French revolution, not to have some similar object in view.—A plan was then formed, gentlemen, in both countries, to assemble a Convention of the people, that was to assume the character and powers of a national representation, and to controul, if not to supercede, the authority of Parliament : with an audacity, 'till then unknown, but since alas, too frequent—it had taken upon itself the task of watching over every transaction of Parliament—of setting limits to its powers, and threatening vengeance if it dared to transgress them : the final object, most clearly was, to lodge

the supreme power in their own hands. What followed, Gentlemen, many of you know; it would be needless therefore on the present occasion to go into the melancholy detail. What I wish to impress on your minds, is simply this—that if you assent to *any* of the various petitions (I say various, gentlemen, because, as you see, this expert cook has prepared a choice of dishes—though with poison in them all) which this man has the effrontery to offer for your signatures—you stigmatize your own judgment and faculties—by stigmatizing your representatives in Parliament. It is one of the beautiful maxims of that noble and immortal fabric of human wisdom—the English Constitution, that all law is *for* the people—*from* the people—and, when abused, or in need of repair, must be remedied *by the* people; yet in that sober, discreet, wise and temperate manner, for which the law has provided, both by the right of choosing your own Legislators, and the right of petitioning itself—which this restless, infatuated man, would fain make you believe is shortly to be no more.—If you have grievances, which fortunately for us, all exist in imagination *only*, and your representatives *will not* listen to your complaints and your directions for amendment—look out for more faithful, more enlightened, more patriotic men—*who will do their duty*—as the independant representatives of a great and a free people.

" As to the right of petitioning, Mr. G—— very well knows that it is a part of the fundamental law of the land, and that it is not in the power even of the King himself to do it away—but he greatly fears, and with reason, that some very proper steps will be taken to arrest his revolutionizing career.—As to a proposed law for the *prevention of sedition*,

which this zealous demagogue is ever ringing in your ears, surely every good subject must rejoice in the passing of such an Act, were it really wanted. But I am apt to think that His Excellency, our illustrious Governor, is better informed than Mr. G—— imagines, and rather supposes the existence of a seditious person, than sedition itself, in any alarming shape. No wonder then Mr. G—— should feel a little sore, and dread the axe which he knows must strike at the root of, and ruin all his plans! *Let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung.* Since my acquaintance with this fine Country, I never heard the slightest intimation that the inhabitants of Hope and Hamilton, were accused of sedition; why, therefore, should they take the trouble of disclaiming and rebutting that which never attached to them: an over anxiety to prove a suspected innocence, hath ever been construed into an appearance, if not a proof, of guilt. Mr. G— has evident pleasure in telling you, that your district, the finest and most extensive in Canada, has been termed *the Rebel District!* what shameless effrontery—what infamy—what vileness of insinuation! Doubtless he was in hopes of finding you so far fallen from your high estate, as to merit that opprobrious epithet. But I trust, gentlemen, that you will know how to uphold your character, thus aspersed, and rebut the abominable charge—from whomsoever and from wheresoever it may proceed, with the keenest indignation of insulted worth. I trust, gentlemen, that not only your conduct of this day, but every day, and that of your children for ever, will shew the whole world that the accusation is false, false as hell!

"Mr. G— knows that the plans he has laid for calling these township-meetings, and for sending delegates to a Convention in York, would not be

tolerated in England—i. e. I mean that the principle could not be admitted as a constitutional principle. Where any public grievance has become insufferable, or any great and general calamity is apprehended, in that land of freedom, it is usual for the country gentlemen, and men of influence and weight in the country, to sign a requisition to the High Sheriff for the purpose of calling a public meeting, which is accordingly done; and the business of whatever nature it may be, orderly and constitutionally conducted: such meetings are indeed regular, and strictly conformable to the law of the land, and the petitions emanating from them have never failed of receiving the most respectful attention on the part of government; neither will they. But it is my full belief, gentlemen, that no petition in which Mr. G—'s name is in any wise implicated or concerned, will be received, or listened to for a moment, by His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, who will be too well informed as to the history of all this farrago. I would, therefore have those gentlemen who may be in doubt, pause a while ere they commit their names with one so notorious. I will also take the liberty of asking Mr. G— whether he has not himself drawn up *all*—or by far the greater part, of the petitions which he has been at the pains to get *bruited* about the country, as the spontaneous voice of thousands of free people, a small part of whom, and a very small part indeed—have been seduced into signature, by every kind of trick and deception it was in his power to play off. Now gentlemen, can any thing be more ridiculous? Look at this man, this self created champion of liberty—narrowly mark all his proceedings, his unsteady, anxious eye, his hurried gait, his pockets swelled out with combustibles, which he is ever ready to

deal forth by handfuls in the hope that one, at least, will be accepted—his artful attempts to raise up a standard of discord, and his quick transitions from truth to misrepresentation and falsehood, and then say whether you would take *such a man*, for your organ, your champion, and your great political leader!

Amongst the numerous false representations of this man, he tells you, that our new settlers are dissatisfied with their lot, and that they are daily leaving this Province in crowds for the United States: *he* complains, not *themselves*, of their being sent so far into the woods for location; as if they could be placed on lands in front already taken up. If he will have them in front, they must be pushed into Lake Ontario; or, what would probably suit his purpose much better, be sent still further in front, even entirely across the water into the land of our enemy, or at least into the possessions of our great rival. I am happy, that circumstances, and my situation together, enable me directly to contradict this statement, which is altogether, and utterly devoid of truth. These new settlers, almost to a man, are not only delighted with their situation, which, indeed, they have every reason to be; but they have written to their friends and connections, even to the remotest degree of acquaintance and consanguinity, in Great Britain, to come out and share in their happiness and prosperity. Many, to my own certain knowledge, have even sold their clothing and furniture, in order to raise a fund for the transportation of their poorer friends and relatives to this happy country, which is rapidly rising to that consequence, wealth, and power, which God and Nature hath decreed for its inheritance and its glory.

Gentlemen, we are, or we ought to be, as one large and happy family; and we ought especially to be on our guard against those who would disturb our tranquility, or embroil us in that civil discord to which we have hitherto, under the blessing of Providence, been happily strangers. The little disorder that has of late occurred in some parts of the Province is *all* to be attributed to the machinations of the man who has this day called you together, not however, as I hope, to meet with your support, but to hear his condemnation. On one account, indeed, I am glad that we have met him; it is this, the generality of the people of this country are so little acquainted with the beauty and inestimable value of their greatest boon, the English Constitution, that I am always happy when an opportunity occurs of commenting upon, or illustrating, the glorious privileges which it bestows on the people who are blessed under its influence. Give me leave to read an extract from a work of the highest authority, which bears immediately upon those very rights which Mr. G— has had the impudence to say you are about to be deprived of for ever." *(Here Mr. F— read an extract from Blackstone's First Chapter on the absolute right of individuals, which appeared to have a great effect upon several individuals present.)*

"You must now see" continued Mr. F— "the futility of this man's arguments, and that you cannot be robbed of your great inheritance—the right of a free representation in parliament, the right of bearing arms for self-defence, and the RIGHT of PETITION. Believe me, gentlemen, you cannot place too high a value upon that which is the envy and the admiration of the world, that wonderful combination of all the perfections of the only three regular forms of government, which the world hath yet seen—the monarchical, the aristo-

cratical and democratical forms of government. It is indeed the climax of human wisdom; and as a noble writer has justly said, we have a code of such wise, rational, and humane legislation as was never before known—which prescribes the rule of conduct, as well to the governors as to the governed:—the principles of which are founded in the perfection of human reason, and, in a great degree on that happy union of Justice and Mercy, which divines have given to the decrees of Omnipotence.—We have seen, the whole civilized world hath seen, what it has been able to accomplish, under the blessings of Providence, for one little spot, even for that dear, little, sea-girt Isle, from which many of us, proudly, derive our descent. Some small and transient errors of administration may have occasionally crept in; it is the nature of all human institutions to be subject to injury or delay; but though these things may happen; though in the long lapse of after ages, and the course of human frailty, this glorious fabric shall fall—yet, in the pages of history it will remain in letters of gold, the wonder and admiration of the world, to the last syllable of recorded time.

It is this Constitution, and this government, we are all called upon to defend; nay, we have sworn to defend it, and I, for one, WILL defend it as long as I have a tongue to wag—or one drop of blood in my veins to shed. Let us be firm—let us be united, and then we may say in the language of our immortal bard, as emphatically applied to our darling country:

"This England never did (nor never shall,)
Lye at the proud foot of a Conqueror,
But when it first did help to wound itself.
Now these her princes are come home again,
Come the three corners of the world in arms,
And we shall shock them: Nought shall make us rue,
If England *to itself do* rest but true."

Gentlemen, I am really fearful of trespassing too long on your attention, but there is one point on which I would comment a little, ere we part, as it is one, in my view, of vital importance to the interests of this country. Mr. G— has given you many compliments on the American people and their government; whether to flatter those amongst you who are more closely connected with that people, or to serve his purposes elsewhere, I shall not divine. But gentlemen, this touches a tender point, on which I would arrest your attention for a few moments, and I wish to God it were in my power to rouse the fullest attention of our Government, and fix all its watchfulness on the same alarming object. Garble and smother it, as you please, we are living and cultivating our fields in the face of an active and a powerful enemy, who has heretofore shewn but little delicacy in scrupling at the basest means to attain his ends. The eye of the wolf, reddening with all the eagerness of keen desire, is steadily fixed upon the unsuspecting lamb, even the lamb of Canada, feeding at ease in this happy country, literally flowing with milk and honey; he is thirsting for your blood; be not deceived by this or that trick—gather yourselves together, be united, be firm, be watchful. Can we have lived so long and not know something of the temper and designs of that ambitious, arrogant people? Do we not know that they have made the possession of this fine country, *a political desideratum* on their part. Believe me, Gentlemen, it is the greatest, the dearest object of their contemplation. I know it from the best private, as well as public information. The late discomfiture only makes them more anxious to try their fortune again. It is a favorite subject of discussion in their private parties, and it has more than once escaped their public orators in Congress assembled. They know

the value of this country, and the day is not very distant when they will once more assail your domestic sanctuaries with all the tumult and horrors of war; another tremendous effort for your subjugation under the yoke of a noisy and unprincipled democracy will be made, *in order to complete*, as they term it, *their territorial arrangements.* Never, perhaps, did any Cabinet use a more coily, deep-laid, policy—nor one more wicked and profligate. Your attention is called to the South, by a flagitious outrage towards Spain, by an assassin-like attack on the Floridas, and by butchering thousands of the poor natives of the neutral ground: whilst, in reality, the greatest and most formidable preparations are going on in the North—in your very face; military roads are making rapid progress through their forests towards the chief point of attack;—Canals, under the double and plausible pretext of commercial improvement—but really for facilitating the transport of heavy ordnance and naval stores, are extending with extraordinary despatch towards the upper Lakes;—whilst the most skilful and experienced Engineers from France, are traversing their whole northern frontier, for the express purpose of fixing upon the most eligible scites for fortifications, and other means of attack. All of which is going on under the immediate inspection of the President himself. And that nothing may be left undone, to render the way more open, emissaries of civil discord are sent forth into the desired land, amongst the devoted people, to lighten up the flames of jealousy and discontent, in order that the deep mouthed dogs of war may have more ready passage to their prey. These things, gentlemen, with many more I might add, are altogether conclusive in my mind of what is preparing for you: and I could have wished that Mr. G—, instead of running off into a variety of

unconnected stuff and nonsense, with which we have nothing to do, had cleared himself of the suspicions which many attach to him, as being more or less concerned in the diabolical plot at which I have hinted. An honest plain-dealing man, goes directly to his point—it is not so here.---Mr. G— shifts his ground too often not to be suspected.— One time we are told of his Agricultural views; at another, we are entertained with disquisitions on the poor Laws of England, with which we have nothing to do here; then of the necessity of reform, in a hundred different ways; and, finally, he has taken a new and more daring step—an attempt to controul Parliament and dictate to the Executive. Depend upon it, gentlemen, all was, and is, a mask—you do not yet see all the evil this artful and dangerous person would bring upon you; and such is my present opinion of his proceedings in public, that I think the people ought to shew their abhorrence and their indignation, by hooting and shouting him from their society, as they would do a fiend of darkness."

THE following Resolutions were adopted and signed by all who were present, with the exception of a very few.

RESOLVED,

That we the Inhabitants of the Townships of Hope & Hamilton, having assembled pursuant to a Public Notice, observe with extreme pain, that Mr. Gourlay's plan and proceedings for addressing the Lt. Governor and House of Assembly, are entirely dissonant with the principles of a Country, enjoying sacred privileges we have to boast of, untarnished by a single grievance.

Resolved—That we totally discountenance any attempt of Mr. Gourlay, to excite indignation against the Lieut. Governor of this Province, or our Representatives now in Parliament assembled.

Resolved—That although we claim the undoubted right of Petitioning, we oppose the measure of Petitioning for a dissolution of the House of Assembly, it being dictated through a private, malicious and turbulent spirit, with a view to bring into disrepute our loyal Representatives, and to organize discontent and commotion, among his Majesty's subjects in Upper Canada.

John D. Smith, J. P.	Myndert Harris,
Chas. Fothergill. J. P.	James W. Fox,
Elias Jones, J. P.	A. McDonell,
R. Henry, J. P.	John Brown,
Francis Raynes,	Dennis ~~Morden~~, Nirdan
John Taylor,	James Ewing, Jr.
Robert Sheriff,	John Hagerman,
Chas. Sheriff, Senr.	Jacob Fyke,
Chas. Sheriff, Junr.	John Burn, J. P.
M. F. Whitehead,	Wm. Sowden,
John Hutchison,	David Ovans,
T. Ward,	C. Cooper,
Thomas Harris,	John C. Burwell,
Walter Birwell, capt. R N	Daniel Simmon,
Erasmus Fowke,	John Farmer,
John Spencer, Sheriff,	John McLean,
Timo. Kittredge,	J. V. Valkenburg,
James Stevens,	John Perry,
John Hannah,	Levi Bates,
J. W. Bethune,	John Gilchrist,
Saml. Potter,	Elisha Jones,
James Caldwell,	Ephraim Farrar,
Thos. Williamson,	Mark Burnham,
John Burnham,	John Wilde[illegible]

Lewis Stile,
John Burnham,
John White,
William Fleming,
James Hunter,
Nicholas Beylan,
Pierre Michon,
Bte. Beauchamp,
John McNie,
James Andrews,
David Furman,
Theophilus Andrews,
Jeremiah Lapp,
Francis H. Burk,
George Elsworth,
Nathaniel Andrews,
Walter Kittredge,
Francis Bercier,
George Huddleston,
Jonas Jones,
Benjamin Burdy,
Benjamin Nichols, jun.
Francis Fike,
Robert J. Kerr,
Levis Lewis,
Robert Summers,

AMHERST, 11*th Nov.* 1818.

FINIS.