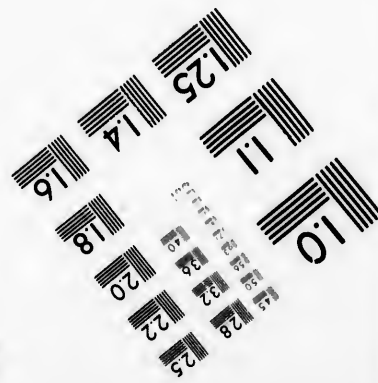
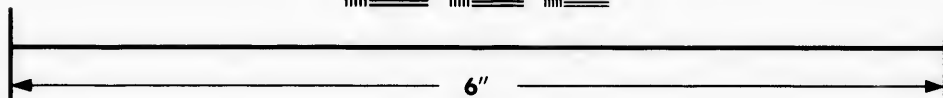
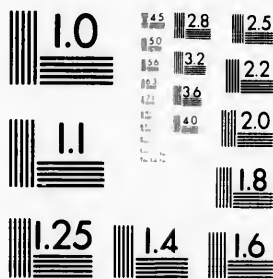


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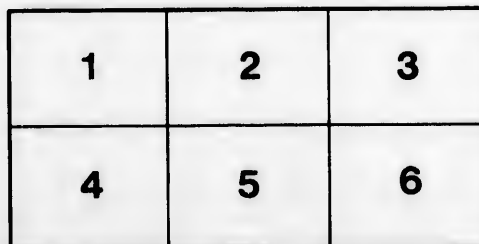
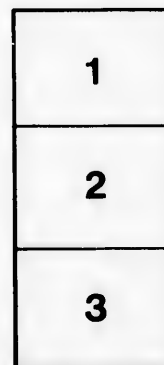
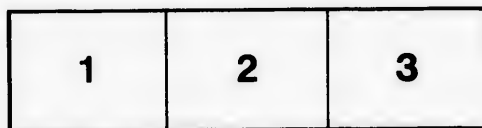
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ETYMOLOGY OF "TORONTO."

WHY I PREFER "PLACE OF MEETING" TO
"TREES IN THE WATER" AS THE
PROBABLE MEANING OF THE
WORD "TORONTO."

A PAPER READ BEFORE THE PIONEER AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF THE COUNTY OF YORK, ONT., OCTOBER 6TH, 1891.
BY THE PRESIDENT, REV. DR. SCADDING.



TORONTO :
PRESS OF "THE WEEK," 5 JORDAN STREET.
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ETYMOLOGY OF "TORONTO."

THERE has been a long continued tradition in these parts of two interpretations of the Indian word "Toronto"; how or when these interpretations began to circulate amongst us, I cannot recall. I certainly heard of them from the earliest moment of my residence here. They were generally understood to be meanings given by Indian interpreters of a former period, and certain reasons were usually assigned for the explanation of the word in the two several meanings given to it.

"Place of Meeting" was supposed to refer to certain gatherings of the Indian bands or tribes at this spot periodically, for purposes of traffic, or for hunting expeditions, or it may be for hostile excursions. "Trees in the Water" on the other hand was imagined with considerable plausibility to be a reference to certain trees which aforetime used to appear here and there along the whole length of our island, or peninsula, as it then really was, which trees must have been notable land marks for canoes, or other small craft then coasting about on the edges of our lake. Indians, we know, everywhere made use of landmarks of this sort from a kind of necessity.

We, white people, formed from Indian expressions euphonious and poetical local names, but to the Indian himself the native term was a simple matter-of-fact designation, employed for practical purposes; there was no such special sentiment in the word to him, as it seems to possess in our minds at the present time.

Years ago when I first became acquainted with these interpretations, no semblance of authority could be produced beyond that to which I have alluded for either of them; they were held to be simply the allegations of

ordinary Indian interpreters, and these were well known to be generally men of no very high qualifications, but simply possessing an acquaintance with their own dialect, or that of perhaps one or two neighbouring tribes; and it was remarkable that uncertainty very often characterized their own explanations, and on giving one meaning another would subsequently be added, which the word might bear, if a slight change were made in its form or sound. It was thus that the two several meanings of "Toronto" were regarded as the alternative so often proposed to the hearer's acceptance by Indian interpreters.

The first person, if my memory serves me, who in my hearing expressed opinions more intelligently than usual on this question, was the late Hon. H. J. Boulton of Holland House, Toronto, who took an especial interest in the name Toronto, at the time when it was seriously proposed to restore its use as a designation of this locality, instead of "York," which for some forty years had been made to do duty for that purpose.

For this happy recovery of a fine Indian local name, the country was indebted in a great measure to the exertions of Mr. Boulton, who had much to do with the passing of the Provincial Act of Parliament in 1834, which authoritatively changed the name of the place from York to Toronto, and my impression is, that in the interpretation of the word he gave the preference to "Place of Meeting"; but I do not remember ever hearing any early documentary evidence quoted in the discussion of the question. The case is very different now—early French documents are accessible to us through reprints, and also early French maps, which amongst ourselves, here in Upper Canada at all events, were scarcely known to exist in 1834, when our city assumed the name of Toronto. These documents and maps of course throw great light upon the subject; we learn from them at once that somewhat more than two hundred years ago the name "Toronto" did not belong to the spot where it is now indelibly fixed. It was applied to a region, waters, and bands of Indians at a considerable distance to the north of the present Toronto, thickly inhabited by Hurons; whilst

the site of the present Toronto was then known by the name of *Teiaiagon*.

Thus we have in Pierre Margery's "Memoires et Documents," Vol. II., p. 115, the following extract from a letter written by the famous La Salle, dated August 22, in the year 1680: "To take up again the course of my journey—I set off last year from *Teiaiagon* on the 22nd of August, and reached the shores of Lake Toronto on the 23rd, where I arrested two of my deserters."

From this we see that on August 22nd he was at *Teiaiagon*—that is to say the locality known afterwards as Toronto, and the day following he arrived on the banks of Lake Toronto, as he very distinctly speaks—that is to say on the banks of Lake Simcoe, as we should speak, where he arrested two men who had been plundering his goods. We thus see that "*Teiaiagon*" and the shores of Lake Toronto are two different localities, distant a day's journey one from the other.

This same *Teiaiagon* is again referred to by La Salle in his remarks on the proceedings of Count Frontenac, forwarded by him to the authorities in Paris in the year 1684 (given in the documentary History of the State of New York, Vol. IX., p. 218).

He there speaks of *Teiaiagon* as a place to which Indians from the North, to whom he gives the general name of *Outaouacs*, came down to traffic with people from the other side of the lake, that is New Englanders; and he stated it as an advantage accruing from the existence of Fort Frontenac, that this trade was thereby stopped and drawn to Fort Frontenac.

What is here stated (by La Salle) corresponds with the testimony of Lahontan, a French officer in charge of Fort St. Joseph, on the western side of the southern entrance to Lake Huron (afterwards Fort Gratiot), as given in his book and in the large map which accompanies it.

Referring to his map on p. 18, Vol. II., Lahontan says: "One sees at the south-east of this river (French River) the Bay of Toronto." This is evidently a portion of the Georgian Bay, including Gloucester and Matchedash Bays, certainly not drawn with the precision of a modern

hydrographic survey. "A river empties itself there," he continues, "which proceeds from a little lake of the same name, *i.e.*, Toronto, forming several impracticable cataracts, both in going up and descending"; this is evidently the Severn. "The man's head," Lahontan adds, "that you see on the map on the edge of this river designates a large settlement of Hurons, which the Iroquois have laid waste. From the source of this river," he continues—this would be the head waters of the Holland River—"one can go into Lake Frontenac (or Ontario) in making a portage as far as the River Tanaouate which empties itself there."

"You can remark on the south shore of the Bay of Toronto," he continues, "the proposed fort which I mentioned to you in my 23rd letter." Thirty leagues from there towards the south one finds the country of the Theonontates (this latter term according to Drake was probably a synonym for the Hurons themselves), which the Iroquois have almost entirely depopulated (the country about the modern Goderich and River Maitland). Lahontan, we may observe, does not give the name Teiaiaagon, but he gives an Indian name for the river along which the trail or portage from Lake Toronto passed southwards to that landing [which river is evidently the Humber]. We also observe on Lahontan's map in the Huron region the expression Toronto Gueronons (*i.e.*, Toronto Indian tribes). The name "Tanaouate," which he gives, I cannot translate. Lahontan's map corresponds with the statements here given, which map was certainly constructed more than 200 years ago, and was no doubt based upon earlier maps. Thus we have again documentary evidence that the word "Toronto" at this period indicated places and tribes far removed from the shores of the present Bay of Toronto.

Hermann Moll's map, printed in London, 1720, gives the same testimony as to the Georgian, Gloucester and Matchedash Bays, being styled Bay of Toronto, etc.

Delisle's map, published at Paris in 1703, places Teiaiaagon where Toronto now stands, at the same time giving Lake Toronto in the Huron region to the north.

Teiaiaagon appears like wise on Charlevoix's map. This map, which is to be found in Vol. III., p. 276, Paris, Quarto, bears the late date of 1744, although the letters of Charlevoix himself are of an earlier date. Here Teiaiaagon is plainly marked on the site of the present Toronto, and the lake to the north is again marked Lake Toronto.

We now come to a period when Teiaiaagon disappears from the face of the maps, the word Toronto taking its place. Exactly five years after the last mentioned date, the trading post, recommended by Galissoniere, was erected by Jonquiere, his successor. The name of this trading post became Fort Toronto. The name officially given to it had been Fort Rouillé in honour of the Colonial Minister of the day at Paris (1749), Antoine Rouillé, Comte de Jouy; but the popular name soon became "Fort Toronto," from the fact that the locality here had been for years known as Toronto, *i.e.*, the "Toronto Landing" on the shore of Lake Ontario, for traders and others bound for the region round what we at the present day call Lake Simcoe, but which region was wholly depopulated and laid waste by invading Iroquois.

The term Teiaiaagon, I have authority for stating, meant simply a landing place, and this accounts for the appearance of the name on some maps at what we should now call Port Hope, where from time immemorial a trail, or much frequented water-way, coming down from the Huron region, terminated. D. W. Smith, first Surveyor-General of Upper Canada, in his *Provincial Gazetteer* notices this fact (1799).

Thus far we have met with no translation into French, or English, of the Indian word "Toronto," in any early document, printed or otherwise; we have been left altogether to one or other of the two traditional explanations already referred to, resting upon the assertions of unknown early Indian interpreters. We now come to a printed work in which we find a translation into French of the word Toronto, and the meaning seems to me decidedly to favour the "Place of Meeting" theory. I refer to Gabriel Sagard's "Dictionnaire de la Langue Huronne," published

at Paris by Denys Moreau in 1632, nearly 260 years ago. Sagard was a missionary in the Huron region, and mastered the language of the natives there. He compiled likewise from personal observation a book, made during his labours in the region as a missionary, entitled "The Great Journey into the Country of the Hurons," situated in America towards the Freshwater Sea (Lake Huron) and extreme confines of New France called Canada, issued in Paris by the same publisher in the same year (1632).

Sagard's dictionary is not so much a regular vocabulary of Huron words as a collection of sentences and phrases in the French and Huron languages, calculated to assist the missionary in his intercourse with the natives of the Huron region. In a set of expressions under the head of *war, killing, attacking*, we light upon the sentence "Toronto *S. ahouyo*," "Il a tué beaucoup de *S*."—that is to say, he has killed a goodly number of enemies, doubtless of a hostile tribe, whose name began with an *S* (for brevity's sake perhaps Sagard does not give the name, but simply writes *S*); it may have been some of the Sonnon-touans (id est, Senecas), who with other Iroquois from the south side of Lake Ontario, had been making one of their customary unnatural raids on their Huron kinsmen—raids as we know which finally proved fatal to the whole Huron region.

In Toronto, here I take it to be self-evident that we have the Huron word "Toronto" with a final *n* attached to express the common Indian nasal sound of *n* termination. Sagard translates it by the French word "Beaucoup," and prefixes it to the letter *S*, meaning certain savages who had been slain; he makes the two together signify a goodly number of those savages. It is thus clearly a noun of multitude, as the old grammarians used to speak, expressive when used in connection with human beings of numerousness, and it is thus in harmony with the idea of the gathering together of a great number of persons.

In another instance of the use of the word, food is referred to, and a large quantity of it is implied thereby. My theory is that, aforesaid, during the heyday of Huron

prosperity the French took especial notice of the frequent use of the sonorous syllables Toronton by the Hurons when speaking of the populousness of their country, its abundance of food products, and the number of convenient trails or water-ways leading up to it from the East, South, West and North, in a certain tone of boastfulness. It was Toronton this and Toronton that. The French accordingly took hold of the expression and made out of it a kind of proper name for their Huron friends. We certainly see *Toronto-Gueronons*, (i.e., Toronto native tribes), in Lahontan's map inscribed across the Huron track.

The French, we know, were wont sometimes to give a name of their own to Indian tribes taken from sounds that caught the ear, or some feature that struck the eye. These names were used among themselves probably, in the first instance, in a jocose sense, but afterwards as a convenient distinction. Iroquois was a term thus manufactured by them from some forms of expression to be frequently heard in the speeches of certain Indian orators. (This we learn from Charlevoix.) Huron itself is a French not an Indian word, originating, it is said, in a grotesque style of wearing the hair, which gave the appearance of a Boar's head—"Hure"—to the head of a Huron warrior.*

When the hostile incursions of the Sonnentons and others of the Six Nation tribes, to which allusion has just been made, had wrought their final effect upon the Huron region and its people, the word Toronto naturally ceased to be applied to the small inland lake and its surrounding native bands in that quarter, and the bay of Lake Huron which once bore that name, and it accordingly disappears from the maps where in 1680 and onwards it was plainly to be seen. It ceased to be applied to that region, but we find it soon afterwards appearing on the shore of Lake Ontario, as I have already remarked, and attached especially to the spot which had been previously known as Teiaiaagon, and marked then by that name.

After the establishment of the trading post at Teiaiaagon,

* In A. Boyer's Royal Dictionary, 1783, "Hure" means the head of a wild boar, or a bear, or a wolf; also a shaggy head of hair.

the idea of the meaning of the name "Toronto" as a place of concourse or meeting together of a goodly number of persons would continue as before. The only frequenters of the north shore of Lake Ontario at this time, however, it is to be remembered were Missisagas, that is to say Otchipways. These, of course, would be among the natives who gathered together, along with others, at the trading post for purposes of busy traffic. That this miscellaneous crowd should be the assemblage of persons now referred to would seem natural enough.

By and by, however, some over-wise Indian interpreter from the Iroquois side of the lake comes to the spot and says: "Oh, you're all wrong." Toronto is an Iroquois word and means not "Place of Meeting," but "Tree or Trees in the Water." Look down there upon the peninsula below you; see there are the trees in the water referred to. Your word "Toronto" is all wrong, it ought to be "Karonta" or Garonta, which, with the addition of an *o* means in my dialect, as employed down in the Mohawk Valley, "Tree or Trees in the Water," and there can be no doubt but that some one speaking this dialect years ago visited this spot and designated it by the name Garonta-o, which you have corrupted and barbarized into Toronto.

Meanwhile other persons not actuated by considerations connected with the language of the Six Nations began to try their hand on the word Toronto. These were persons who were acquainted to some extent with Italian or maps of Italy, and the idea took possession of them that Toronto was a corruption of the name Tarento, which occurs in the maps of Italy. Hence in some documents, and occasionally in an early map, we have Toronto figuring as Taronto, Toranto, Tarento, Taranto, or some such word. Thus had the Mohawk interpreter's theory prevailed in 1834, when the name of York was removed by Act of Parliament, we should have had as an appellation of the capital of Ontario, not the beautiful and now world-noted name "Toronto," but some such fantastic title as Garonta-o, Karonta-o, based on a blunder in geography and history; or if the theory of the other innovators had prevailed it might

possibly have been one of the hybrid forms, part Indian, part Italian, just alluded to: Toronto, Toranto, Tarento, or Taranto. What an escape!!

We have now to trace, so far as we may, the origin of the "Trees in the water" tradition. I have already given it to be understood that it rested likewise simply on the assertion of early Indian interpreters. I do not remember that I ever heard of any evidence of the fact afforded by an early document, written or printed; and it is only in recent years that my attention has been drawn to a dictionary of Indian words, compiled by Jacques Bruyas, of the Jesuit order, 1670-80—it is entitled "Root-words of the Mohawk Language." In this work some theorists on the subject which is engaging our attention think they have found a certain degree of support for the "Trees in the water" hypothesis. On page 94 Bruyas gives as the Mohawk word for tree, "garonta"; then on page 117, after stating that *o* at the end of a word sometimes meant "in, or upon water," he gives as an example, "garonto," contracted, as we may suppose, from "garontao, a tree in the water"—information which we may accept as a matter of fact, without any remark. The objection comes when an attempt is made to associate these words with the local proper name, Toronto, as component parts or roots thereof.

The compiler of a lately published dictionary of Indian terms endeavours to do this. J. A. Cuoq, a French presbyter of the Sulpitian order, in his Lexicon of the Iroquois language, gives us precisely the same information as Bruyas does in language somewhat amplified, but he does not stop there. He adroitly introduces the name Toronto into his dictionary in such a way as to lead the reader to gather of his own accord that the Mohawk words Karonta and *o* enter as elements into its composition.

Thus we have the following item: "*Toronto, Capital de la Prov. d'Ontario, Canada, litt. un arbre dans l'eau.—voyez Karonta, et o.*"

On turning to Karonta we find it to signify a tree, just as Bruyas informed us, and, on turning to *o*, we find it explained by the rather high-sounding expression,

"plongé dans un liquide—dans une substance plus ou moins liquide"—plunged in a liquid—in a substance more or less liquid, including, of course, water.

The reader is then left without further notice to draw the conclusion that he is in possession of the true elements of the word Toronto. This, it will be seen, is a very dogmatic item—no doubt or hesitation is expressed in it on the subject referred to. The point at issue is calmly assumed. The local tradition dating back for many a long year that the name of the Capital of Ontario bore quite another signification, viz., "Place of Meeting," is unknown to the writer of this dictionary, or, if known, is entirely ignored.

The only variations to be seen on the early French maps and in early French documents of the name Toronto, may be enumerated. They are Taronto, Toranto, Torento, Tarento.

There is no inkling that the first syllable was ever Ka or Ga.

To bring the Mohawk expression into a full conformity with the Huron word, or the Huron into full conformity with the Mohawk expression, violence must be done to the one or the other; hence it is reasonable to conclude that the two terms, in spite of a slight similarity in sound, are independent of each other, and their respective meanings different from each other.

Cuoq is evidently too cock-sure; but this would be a matter of little importance were it not that his statements appear in a work which doubtless will hereafter be frequently consulted, and which, from its respectable look, will be held of great authority. His statements are thus likely to mislead many who are ignorant of the minute particulars of the question, but who accept as Gospel everything they meet with in print. I have already seen it publicly quoted as decisive of the question of the meaning of the word Toronto. Cuoq has made a very unfair use of his position as editor and compiler of a dictionary. He should never have allowed himself to admit into his work without qualification the item headed "Toronto," accom-

panied by the explanations he has chosen to give of the word.*

This is the first time (A.D. 1882) that the name of our city—so far as I know—has ever been associated in print so decidedly with the one-sided interpretation of "Trees in the water." The testimony of Bruyas is, however, curious and interesting, as furnishing at last some clue to the origin of the "Trees in the water" tradition, although as we have seen the interpretation of the local name, Toronto, which it seems to support, is the wrong one.

In view, then, of the facts and considerations just now set forth: 1. That the word Toronto was employed as a proper name for the first time, so far as we know, in the Huron region, *i.e.*, the region between Lakes Huron and Simcoe, as shown by primitive French maps, and other early documents.

2. That a striking characteristic of this Huron region was its great populousness, as shown by Creuxius' map, dotted over with innumerable Indian villages or stations, and by the testimony of early French writers.

3. That the word "Toronto" occurs almost pure and simple in a dictionary or vocabulary of Huron terms and expressions, compiled by a missionary the scene of whose labours was this identical region.

4. That the meaning given by this missionary to the Huron word "Toronto" harmonizes very well with the idea of large numbers congregated together when applied to human beings, as in the instance which he gives, Toronton S. ahouyo "J'ai tué beaucoup de S." I have killed a goodly number of Sonontouans, perhaps, as I have previously suggested. Let the other interpretation "Trees in the water," derived from the old tradition, be ever so plausibly made out, as based upon a Mohawk expression or otherwise, yet it will be seen that this interpretation has no special point or meaning when applied as a proper name in the Huron region, where, as we have seen, populousness was the great characteristic, and the phrase "Trees in the water" was not by any

* The item has already been given above at full length.

means descriptive. This interpretation would go far to prove that the Huron region was a wide area of drowned lands, whereas we gather from every testimony it was a tract of fine soil cultivated to an extraordinary degree and thickly inhabited. This last-mentioned interpretation evidently came into vogue at a later period, when the name "Toronto" had been transferred from the Huron region and attached permanently to a locality on the shores of Lake Ontario, viz., to the spot at the western entrance to our harbour, where the old French trading-post, known as "Fort Toronto," was afterwards established. This lodgement of the name Toronto, at the lower end of the trail from Lake Huron, is to be especially noted. It was a happy survival, for it led to the preservation of the name. The name Toronto became popularly attached to the trading-post established in 1749, not far from the terminus of the trail from Lake Huron, and ultimately to the great city which at length took the place of that trading-post. It had clung to the Huron region long after the Hurons were gone, just as it clung to the lower end of the trail after the principal necessity for that trail had ceased to exist.

In view then, I say, of these facts and considerations I hold myself to be justified in thinking that the balance of probability is in favour of "Place of meeting," or "Place of gathering together of large numbers," as the genuine interpretation of the word Toronto—a meaning which the name once undoubtedly bore, for some reason or other, as is shown by a long-continued tradition.*

The citizens of Toronto are to be congratulated on the persistency of the word "Toronto." It has curiously escaped change and disfigurement. Toronto is the nor-

*D. W. Smith, in his Gazetteer, p. 146, states that the chain of lakes between Matchedash Bay and the head of the Bay of Quinté once bore the name of the Toronto Lakes, and the communication from the one to the other was called the Toronto River. This nomenclature appears on old French maps. The name Toronto would naturally drop off from these waters when the region to which they led, the great rendezvous or place of meeting of the Hurons, became depopulated. For the same reason the river Humber would lose its name of the Toronto River, which D. W. Smith remarks it also once possessed.

mal or standard form to which the word always reverts, after a momentary variation, either through ignorance or inadvertence, now and then, in the mode of writing down its vowel sounds. On primitive maps and early documents we have *a* appearing for *o* in the first syllable of the word. But this *a* (to be pronounced of course *aw*) again soon disappears, and the name resumes its original form.

The name of our city reads now, letter for letter, as we see it written in the earliest French maps, and early French documents—we write the word precisely as La Salle wrote it (as we have seen), as Galissonière and la Jonquière wrote it ; as Vaudreuil wrote it ; as Pouchot wrote it ; as Major Robert Rogers wrote it, when after the Conquest of Quebec he was sent up to take possession of the trading-post, or rather, the remains of the trading-post here ; as the pioneer land surveyor, Augustus Jones, wrote it ; as Commodore Bouchette wrote it, and as our first Provincial Surveyor General, the Hon. D. W. Smith, wrote it everywhere in his well-known Gazetteer, published in 1799 ; and as it has been written by everyone since D. W. Smith's time, who had any competent knowledge of the subject.

And then, as to the traditional meaning of the word "Toronto," which I am inclined to favour, as denoting a place or region where a goodly number of inhabitants are collected together, its appropriateness was evident when applied to the populous Huron region, where it first originated ; and it was reasonably appropriate afterwards, when it came to be applied to the trading-post on the shores of our bay, having regard to the numbers of traders and others, whom we may suppose gathered there from time to time for purposes of traffic. It was also reasonably appropriate when in 1834 the town, which had grown up near the site of that trading-post, had assumed such respectable dimensions as to shelter, within the very modest structures of which it was then composed, 9,254 persons, thereby justifying the Act of Parliament passed on the 6th of March in that year, for its civil incorporation, under the name of the City of

Toronto,* and it surely is appropriate in the highest sense in the present year of grace, 1891, when the same city assembles within its limits a population of well-nigh 200,000 souls.

The question we have been considering is largely an historical, not a linguistic one. Comparative philology will not settle it. So far as the name Toronto is concerned, there is no need of tracing doubtful vowel changes, or transmutations of consonants. To understand the question aright we must be acquainted with the records of the present site of Toronto, and also with those of the Huron region, north of Toronto, together with the character of its soil and its former numerous inhabitants.

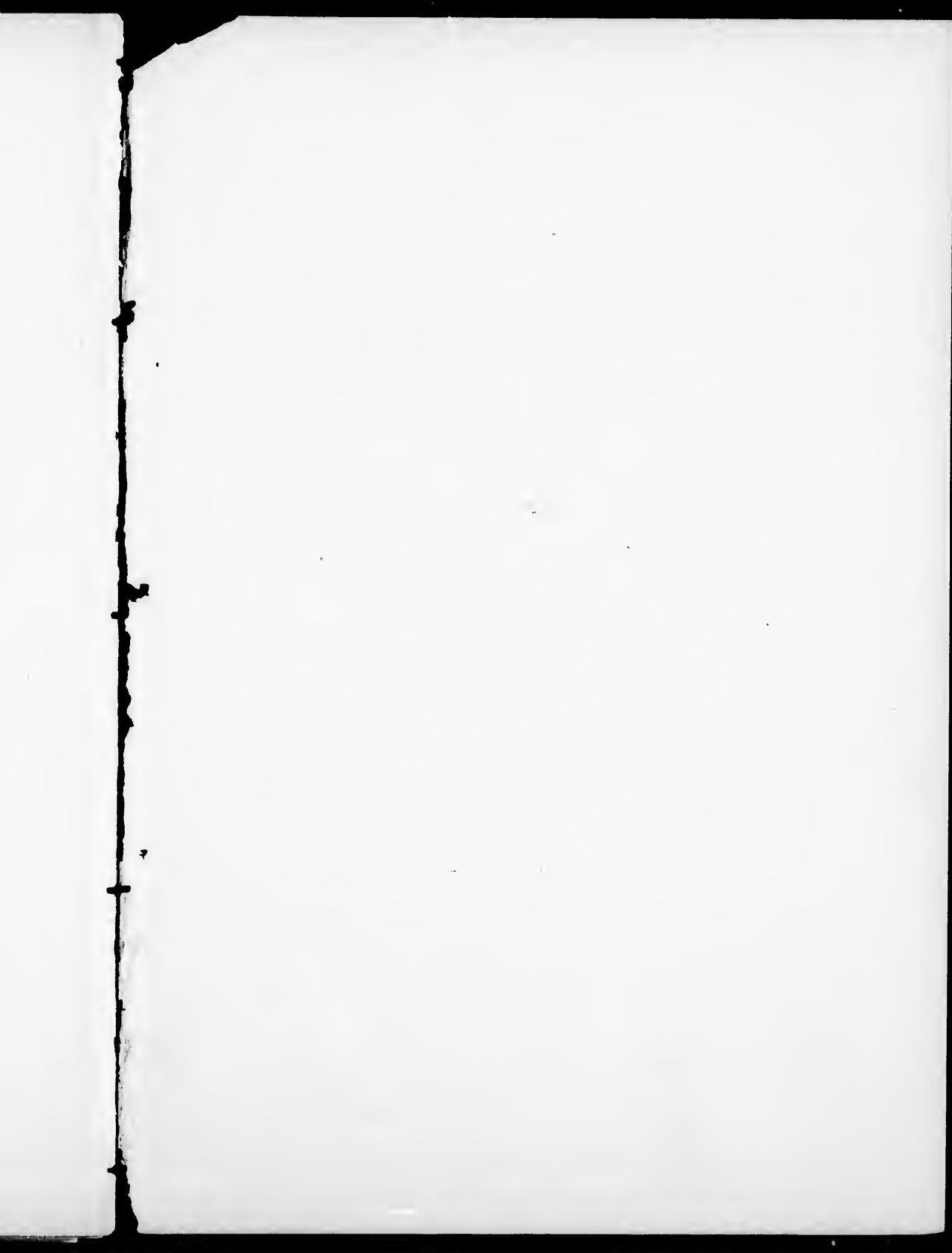
All that I have aimed at in this paper is to point out on which side the balance of probability seems to rest, between two theories. I do not think that either of them can be mathematically proved, but, as it seems to me, for the reasons which I have given, that the balance is much in favour of the "Place of meeting" theory.

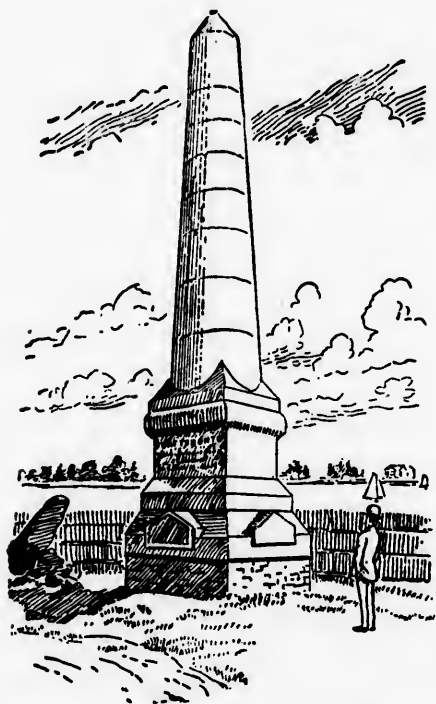
I bid adieu to my reader or hearer with the kindly words of Horace to his friend Numicius:—

Vive. Vale. Si quid novisti rectius istis,
Candidus imperti. Si non, his utere mecum.

Farewell, and if any likelier views are thine,
Impart them frankly, or make use of mine.

* A portion of the preamble of this Act, assented to by the Lieut.-Governor, March 6, 1834, reads as follows: "Whereas the name of York is common to so many towns and places that it is desirable for avoiding inconvenience and confusion to designate the Capital of the Province by a name which will better distinguish it, and none appears more eligible than that by which the site of the present town was known before the name of York was assigned to it, therefore, etc." The petition to the House, signed by W. B. Jarvis and 172 others, had been simply for the incorporation of York under the style and title of the City of York. The name Toronto seems to have been substituted by an amendment during the discussion of the subject.





MONUMENT ON THE SITE OF THE OLD FRENCH FORT
AT TORONTO, UNVEILED BY THE GOVERNOR-
GENERAL, LORD LANSDOWNE,
SEPT. 6TH, 1887.

