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*Hommage de l'auteur,  
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*Léon Gérin*

# THE HURONS OF LORETTE

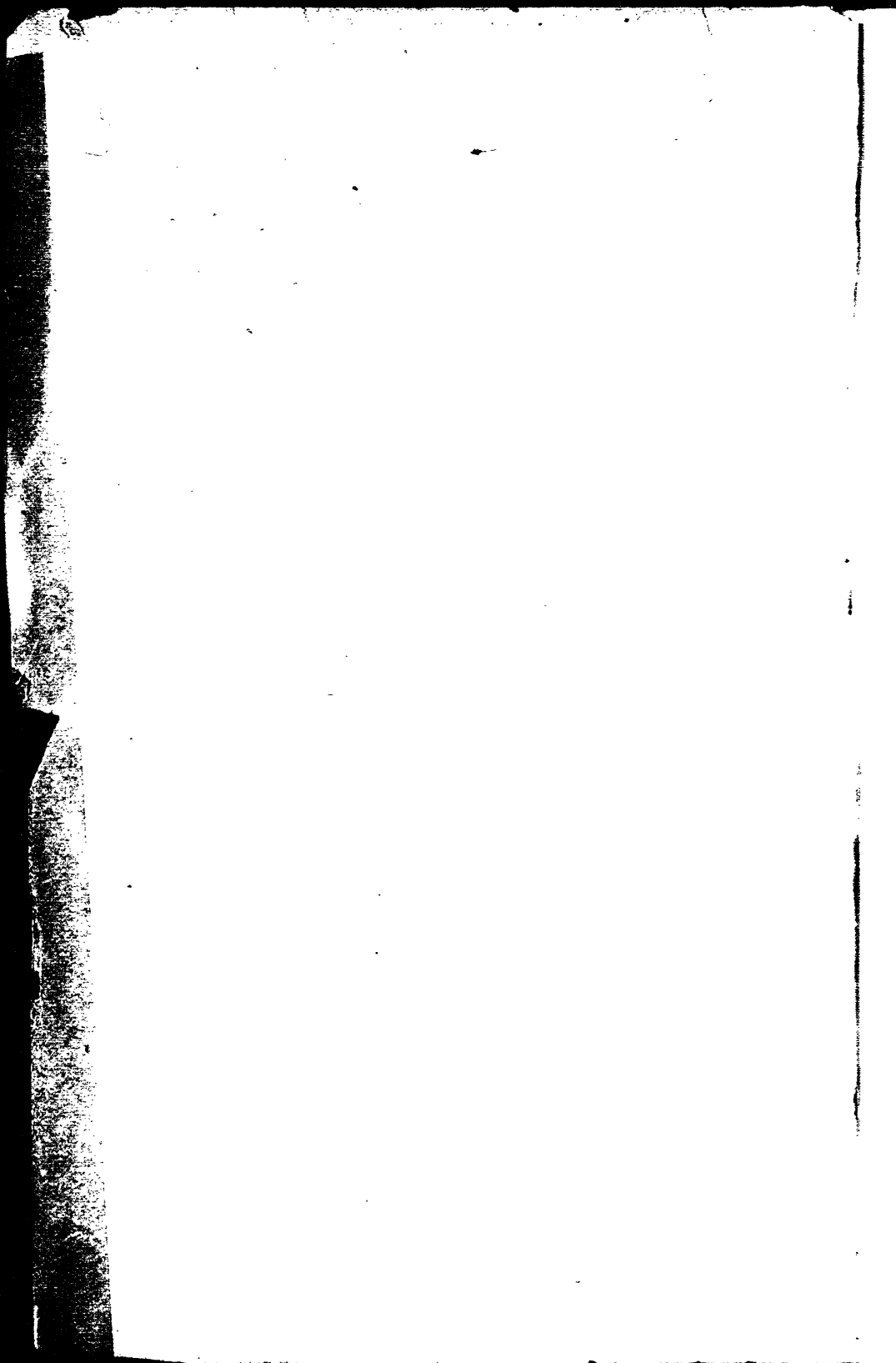
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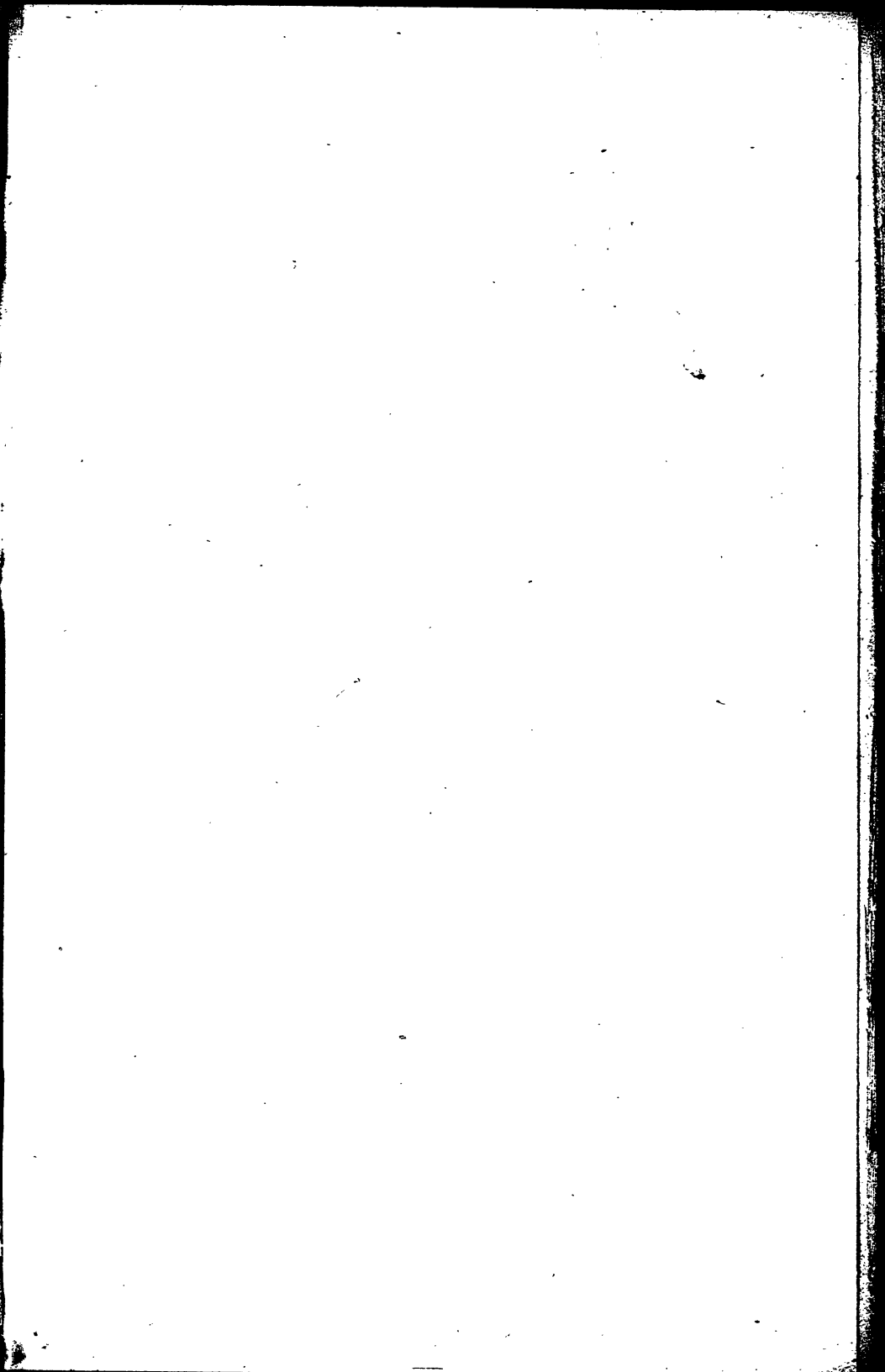
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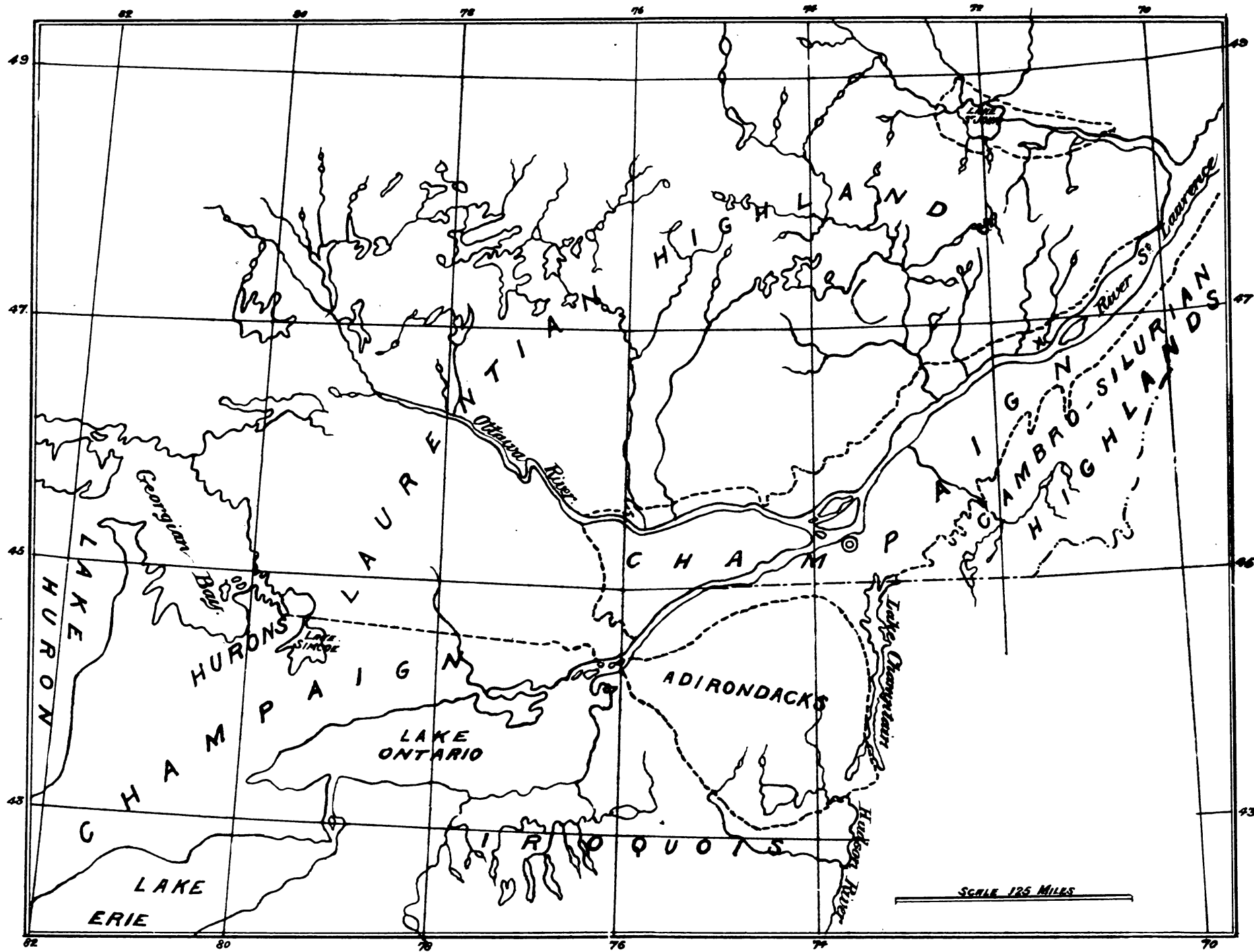


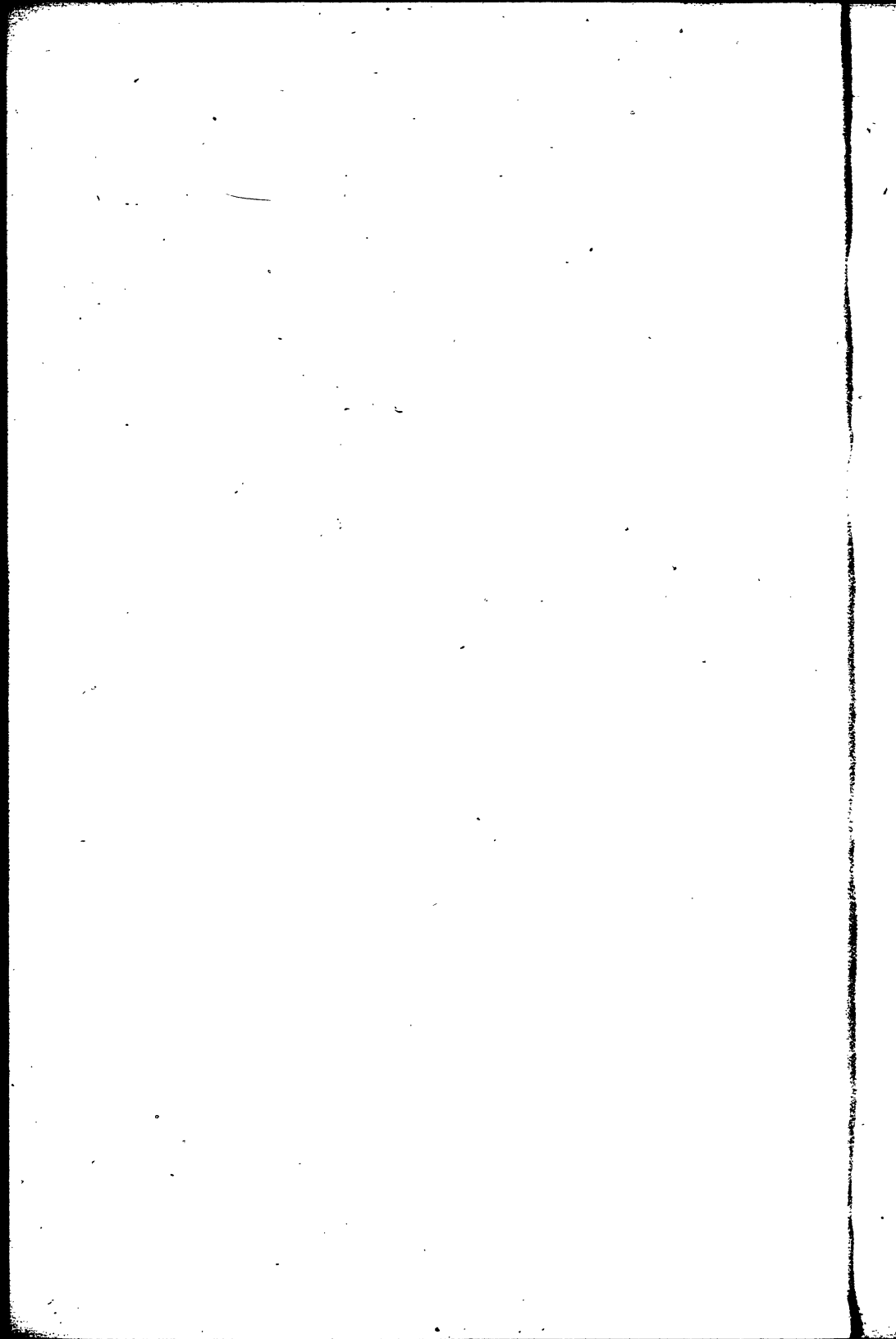
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# THE HURONS OF LORETTE

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The French travellers and missionaries who explored the basin of the St. Lawrence at the beginning of the seventeenth century, found, within that vast area, two distinct races of aborigines :

(1) The Algonquins, nomadic hunters, roving over the lower valley and the northern highlands :

(2) The Huron-Iroquois, of more sedentary habits, with some development of agriculture, a better defined and more solid organization, settled in the region of the three great lakes Ontario, Erie, Huron.

The Hurons numbered twenty thousand people or more, and their villages covered the land from the shores of Lake Simcoe to those of Georgian Bay. It is from this point, that after its overthrow by the Iroquois, a portion of the Huron nation repaired to Quebec, and finally took root at Lorette,\* where they still form a separate group.

Throughout some northern townships of Simcoe County, remains of Huron occupation have been for sixty years past, and are still at the present time being found : ancient village sites are discovered, bone pits are brought to light, fragments of primitive pottery are unearthed.†. Meanwhile, at Lorette, the observer is confronted with debris of a very different character : social traditions still persistent and to quite an extent impressing the minds and moulding the lives of French-speaking descendants of the primitive Hurons.

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\*On the map attached, the location of Lorette is shown by the sign x.

†A. F. Hunter, Sites of Huron Villages, Appendix to the Report of the Minister of Education, Ontario, 1898, 1899.

The Iroquois were a confederation of five tribes, whose settlements, south of Lake Ontario, extended in an almost straight line from the Genesee River to the sources of the Mohawk and Hudson rivers in the Adirondacks. From a few of these tribes, the Jesuits, subsequent to 1667, gathered the foundation stock of a colony which still exists at Caughnawaga, near Montreal.\*

Last summer, guided by the LePlay and de Tourville method of social enquiry, I attempted an investigation into the social conditions of the Hurons of Lorette. I endeavored to ascertain, as fully as the short time at my disposal permitted, the present status of the community, the degree of its variation from the primitive type, and the influences which brought about this variation.


I also visited the Iroquois of Caughnawaga with a view to securing a ready point of comparison.

#### PHYSICAL FEATURES.

In order to obtain an insight into the social characteristics of any human grouping, it is necessary, first, to investigate its means of living; and these, in almost every case, will be largely dependent on the natural resources of the locality. Let us then see what are the physical features and resources of the country surrounding Lorette.

The first fact to be noticed is the situation of Lorette at the meeting point of two great regions widely different in the relief and composition of their soil, as well as in their natural capabilities and productions.

On the one hand, to the South, towards the St. Lawrence, a relatively narrow belt of flat, low country, through which the River St. Charles slowly winds its course to its estuary at Quebec. The soil of that champaign region is generally deep, fertile and specially well adapted to agricultural pursuits, as evidenced by the fine expanse of cultivated fields interspersed with comfortable farm houses, cosy villages and glittering church steeples which one may observe from the elevated terrace of Indian Lorette, while in the distance, some ten miles away, loom up the busy suburbs of Quebec, the cape and the citadel.

\*On the map, the location of Caughnawaga is shown by the sign .



On the other hand, to the North, along the upper course of the St. Charles, lies a strip of level but rather poor, sandy soil, and the country then merges into a vast mountainous tract which extends to Hudson Bay and the Atlantic Ocean, interrupted only by the valley of the Saguenay and Lake St. John. That North Laurentian mountainous region presents a succession of rocky, rounded summits, cut by narrow valleys, with sparse, limited areas of shallow soil; a land well adapted for the production of fine timber, especially for the growth of the coniferæ, and originally an unexcelled thriving ground for the fur-bearing animals, but over the greater part of its extent offering little inducement to agricultural settlers, who only of late years have taken a foothold within its borders.

If we compare the geographical position of our Lorette Hurons with that occupied by their ancestors in the vicinity of Lake Simcoe, during the first half of the seventeenth century, we cannot fail to notice their close similarity. Although separated from East to West by an interval of nearly 400 miles, and though the one is 150 miles (2 degrees) to the South of the other, both points lie alike at the very edge of that same Laurentian formation, betwixt mountain and plain, with a vast natural hunting ground on the one side, and deep soils inviting tillage on the other.

Neither is this to be looked upon as a mere coincidence. Such a position would commend itself to people of the Huron-Iroquois type, relying for their maintenance, on the produce of the chase and, in about equal measure, on that of a rude, primitive agriculture.

If we glance at the map here given, we will observe that while the various groups of that stock had their fixed abodes within the champaign region bordering on the Great Lakes, none was very far distant from mountainous tracts, some of which even up to this day, have remained typical breeding grounds for wild animals. Two instances are particularly striking: (1) Next to the ancient habitat of the Hurons, that sportsman's resort of to-day, the Muskoka and Parry Sound country; and (2) close to the old Mohawk settlements, the famed Adirondacks, the one and the other resting on the rugged Laurentian formation.

It may be broadly stated that the champaign region is made

up of two varieties of soil : (1) a belt of rich clays, bordering on both shores of the River St. Lawrence ; (2) a belt of poor sands, bordering on the mountain ranges.

The Hurons of Lorette, though still within the flat, or champaign region, are not on its inner, fertile zone, but on its outer sandy zone. At their village, called Indian, or Jeune Lorette, the line of demarcation between the two zones is very apparent. Here the River St. Charles passes through a steep and narrow gorge, to a lower level. From the terrace on which Jeune Lorette stands, if we look down the course of the St. Charles, there appear to us on the dark rich loams, in close succession, the farms of St. Ambroise, Ancienne Lorette, Charlesbourg, Ste. Foye and Beauport. On the contrary, should we turn northward and ascend the course of the St. Charles, farms would no longer be observed on the sandy riverside, but instead an after-growth of spruces, and the summer villas of some professional men of Quebec.

At Caughnawaga, nine miles from Montreal, on the opposite shore of the St. Lawrence, where thrives a community of some 2000 Iroquois, the physical conditions are not at all similar to those amid which the Hurons of Lorette have been made to develop. In fact they are almost the complete reverse.

The champaign region, and, with it, its inner fertile belt of marine clays, on both banks of the St. Lawrence, increase rapidly in width as we proceed from Quebec to Montreal. In a general way these are described by Canadian geologists as covering a triangular area, the apex of which is towards Quebec, while the base runs from Ottawa to the head of Lake Champlain. It will thus be seen that Caughnawaga stands in the centre of a wide plain, is surrounded on all sides by a flat country provided with a rich soil.

It may be added that the mountainous region which bounds the plain to the South-East, is of slight altitude, and underlaid not by very hard granites and schists, like those of the Laurentian formation, but by softer rocks, limestones and slates, of the Cambrian and Silurian series, which by weathering have yielded abundant and generally rich soils. So that wide ranges of this mountainous country are well adapted for farming and at an early date were taken possession of by agricultural settlers.

In fine, while the natural conditions surrounding the Hurons of Lorette may be summed up as follows : nearness of vast mountain and forest tract, limitation of tillable area ; the position of the Iroquois of Caughnawaga, on the contrary, is characterized by the development of the fertile belt and the limitation of the mountain and forest tracts. These two sets of physical conditions have had far reaching effects on the evolution of the communities swayed by them, and, first, on their systems of labour, as we will see presently.

#### LABOUR.

As the traveller from Quebec reaches by the Quebec and Lake St. John railway, the village of Indian Lorette, the means of living of the inhabitants are vividly revealed to his senses. On the right, he cannot fail to notice an extensive field covered with poles and rails, on which hides in great numbers are hung up to dry. To the left, between the railway track and the River St. Charles, he observes some fifty houses, nearly all alike : small, low-roofed, wooden buildings, whitewashed, in double rows separated by narrow lanes. On small plots adjoining some of these houses, hide-drying scaffolds and hide-dressing apparatus similar to those just noted, only on a smaller scale, are visible. Some houses have very small kitchen gardens attached ; but others are so close together, that not even space sufficient for a flower garden remains.

I visited several of these houses, and found them to be as many workshops, or as many homes of workers performing various tasks and turning out various wares on their own account, or for the benefit of an outside employer who provided the raw material and paid his help wages by the day or piece.

While some of the men were engaged, at Bastien's, or Cloutier's, or Ross' tannery, steeping the green skins in water, and then scraping off the inner (or meat) layer, and the first outer layer (with the hair) ; another class of workmen, on the same grounds, following up the process, washed the skins in soap emulsions, put them up to dry, sprinkled them with codfish oil, sand-papered them, and finally passed them through a smoking house.

Meanwhile, in the workshop connected with each establishment, the boss, or skilled workmen under his supervision, cut out

of the thick, velvety, odorous surface of the dressed skin, the various pieces, bottoms, tops and uppers, required for the manufacture of moccasins.

These several pieces are then distributed among the women, at their homes in the village, some of whom embroider the top pieces with moose hair of various tints, while others undertake the turning up and wrinkling of the bottoms, and others still sew on the uppers.

The moccasins are then returned to the workshop of the employer, where with the aid of a few simple machines, holes are punched through the uppers, eyelets and hooks fastened on. Laces are made from strips of the hides, and the moccasins packed and shipped to distant points.

At other times, we might find the men in large numbers busy making snowshoes, bending into shape the slender wooden frames and weaving in the strings. Again, occasionally, we might be attracted by the sight of a newly-made, freshly painted, canvas canoe, drying in the sun on the verandah of some cottage.

I had not been long in the village of Lorette, before three or four dark-eyed children ran up to me and offered various small wares. Bright little girls were they, not easily fooled and quick at sales. I was taken by them to their parents' homes, and there viewed displays of ornamental baskets, canoes, fans, etc. Men were leisurely preparing strips of ash and discs of various woods, which the women and grown-up girls use in the making of the baskets and fancy wares.

While gazing upon the display of wares at the house of Prudent Tsioui, I made the acquaintance of another Huron, who was working for him, Daniel Gros-Louis. The latter, does not manufacture on his own account, but works by the day at the various industries carried on in the village; and his principal vocation is accompanying, as guide, city sportsmen on their annual outing in the woods. That evening I hired Gros-Louis to take me a few miles up the St. Charles, and as we glided slowly, in the dusk, over the dark waters of the picturesque forest-fringed stream, he told me in language at times forceful, of the woes of the poor Indians, despoiled of their hunting grounds by the encroachments of the white settlers and the leases

to clubs. Gros-Louis stated clearly that in his opinion there are only two decent kind of people: first, the Indians, like himself of course, then the "gentlemen," who occasionally help the Indian on. As for the "habitants," they are a stupid lot, who work hard and ignore the pleasures of life.

The Huron villagers do not seek any appreciable part of their income from agriculture, nor even from those more simple opportunities offered by country life. Only three or four families keep cows (one each), and a few hens. The others purchase from French farmers the very milk and eggs they consume. Only one keeps horses.

However, being informed that on a reserve 1600 arpents in extent, two miles distant from the village, a few Hurons were settled on farms, I started out, one morning, on my bicycle, rode through the village of St. Ambroise (adjoining Indian Lorette), down to the lower plain, along a range of good French Canadian homesteads, and soon coming once more upon a stretch of sandy uplands, was apprised that I had reached the Indian reserve.

The six or seven Huron families settled here (though they may occasionally turn out a few pair of snowshoes) do not resort to industry in at all the same measure as do the Lorette villagers. They are supposed to depend principally on farming, but can hardly be considered farmers. Much the greater part of the Reserve is still bush. Each farm comprises only a few arpents (at most ten or twelve) of cleared land, on which, at the time of my visit, the only growth to be observed, apart from a small garden and potato patch, was a miserable field of very thin hay, overrun by oxeye daisy. In rare instances, a crop of a few bushels of oats might be added. When farm animals were kept at all, the stock consisted of one cow (exceptionally two), one horse (if any), one or two porkers and a few hens. Attracted to one of these homesteads by the rather better appearance of the house and barn, compared with the hovels on most of the other clearings, I was disappointed to find that the husbandry there carried on was of the same undeveloped, primitive type. I did not see any stock, but was met by the fierce barking of three or four dogs coming out in succession from under the door steps. "They are very good hunting dogs," the people told me by way of apology.

For the Hurons of the Reserve, a more important, and certainly more congenial means of living than agriculture, is hunting. Beaver, otter, marten, mink, cariboo, are still in fairly large numbers over the vast unsettled track which extends towards Lake St. John; but moose, the most valuable for manufacturing purposes, is scarce now.

Just as Gros-Louis had done the evening previous, the Tsiouis of the Reserve bitterly complained of interference with their hunting privileges on the part of the whites, through governmental regulations and leases to clubs. Forest rangers were on the look-out, and frequently confiscated the pelts and destroyed the traps of the poor Indians.

The resources derived from their farms and their hunting expeditions are inadequate for the support of these Hurons, and they would be in utter misery, were it not for some additional revenue obtained in various ways: drawing firewood from the reserve to the Lorette villagers, day labour performed on the railway and elsewhere in the vicinity, and oftentimes, the very material help provided by their women folk. The occupant of the first house I entered on the Reserve, was an old man supported partly by a son living with him but working for a baker at St. Ambroise; and partly by a daughter, who kept his house and did some sewing for outsiders.

Now and then a Huron will leave the village or the Reserve and spend a few years in the United States, employed as common laborer, when he will return to his former home.

To sum up the labour system of Lorette: Hunting is today of little account, except for very few of the Hurons; but a number of the men hire out periodically as guides to parties of sport seekers from the cities. Farming is not carried on to any appreciable extent. The only important means of living are manufacturing industries, such as the making of baskets and of various fancy wares, the making of canoes and of snowshoes, and above all, the making of moccasins and the dressing of hides therefor. It is to be observed that the hides used in the manufacture of moccasins are for the greater part imported: East India elk and antelope. Of the skins the produce of the region, moose has become scarce, cariboo is suitable only for mittens, gloves and the

uppers of moccasins ; cow, for snowshoes. Neither is fine birch bark commonly found within reasonable distance, and canoes (of which about 25 are sold yearly) are mostly made of canvas purchased at Quebec. Ash wood for basket-making is also obtained from distant points.

On the other hand, moccasins and snowshoes are sold by the wholesale to dealers in large towns and cities throughout Canada and in the United States. They are shipped as far as the Klondike. As for baskets and fancy wares, part of the output is disposed of in the same way, the bulk of what remains being taken by the Hurons themselves to summer resorts and centres of population, and there retailed.

The means of living of our modern Hurons as just described, do not at first sight appear to have any connection either with the previous social status of the race, or with the physical features of its present habitat.

With the ancient Hurons, as with the ancient Iroquois, hunting (carried on by the men), agriculture (carried on by the women), were the principal means of subsistence ; to-day at Lorette, both these forms of labour have been almost given up. In their stead manufacturing industries have grown and come into prominence, industries, however, which do not depend for their raw material on the resources of the locality, and which find in the vicinity a market for a very small portion only of their output.

Two main series of facts brought the Hurons by degrees to give up their old forms of labour and adopt new ones :

- (1) The neighbourhood and competition of settlers from Europe ;
- (2) The commercial and industrial evolution.

In the first place, the neighbourhood and competition of white settlers in the vicinity of Quebec had the effect of rendering agriculture more difficult and less remunerative for the Hurons.

The agriculture of the Hurons, as we are aware, was of a primitive kind. It consisted solely in the production through female labour of supplies of vegetables and maize for family needs. No live stock, no beasts of burden were kept. So that, being without the means of manuring the land or drawing fuel

long distances, they were obliged to change their location as soon as the fertility of the soil and the supply of firewood within a limited radius, were exhausted.

In the old Huron country the change of abode, according to Champlain, took place every ten, twenty or thirty years. The same practice was followed by the Huron refugees in the vicinity of Quebec. But here, while the Indians were always free to desert their village site and seek a new one farther in the interior, they were no longer at liberty to retrace their steps. The crowding in of the Habitants around them prevented their moving in any but one direction. From Sillery, the Island of Orleans and Beauport they receded to Ste. Foye (1667), from Ste. Foye to a spot known at present as Ancienne Lorette (1674), and finally from Ancienne Lorette to Jeune Lorette (1697), where they are to-day. Thus were they evicted from the fertile belt of rich lowlands to the sandy terrace bordering the mountain tract. The new conditions were not favorable from the outset to the development in these primitive men of a stronger disposition for agriculture.

As a second result of the neighbourhood and competition of the white settlers about Quebec, the chase also was hampered and curtailed, wild animals receding and becoming scarcer all the time as the settlements extended further back. This second result, however, was effected at a much later date than the first, and not so thoroughly. Not before the close of the eighteenth century or the opening of the nineteenth, do the Hurons of Lorette show signs of discomfort on account of scarcity of game.

Coincidentally, a third result was brought about: the development of the traditional home industries of the Hurons, consequent on the decrease of both agriculture and the chase. To make up for the deficiency in the returns from their farm plots and hunting expeditions, they now took to turning out for the trade the various wares which heretofore they had manufactured solely for their family needs. The greater value thereby given to the skins, made up in part for their greater scarcity.

The changes in the labour system of the Hurons of Lorette, thus induced by the neighbourhood and competition of the French settlers, have, of recent years, been greatly intensified by a very powerful factor: the evolution of commerce and industry.



The latter half of this century, and particularly the last twenty-five years, witnessed the rise and spreading throughout Canada of the world-wide commercial and industrial evolution, that is, the introduction of machinery, the building of railroads and canals, the extension of great transportation agencies. Man's powers of production and distribution have thereby been increased a hundred-fold. Distance has been suppressed, so to speak; and each locality is now afforded the opportunity to develop and pursue on a large scale those industries for which it is best adapted by its natural resources or its social conditions.

The commercial and industrial evolution was the death-blow to some of the minor industries of Lorette, but into others it instilled a new life. Competition put a stop to the manufacture of toboggans and of lacrosses; but a new industry, fancy basket-making, taken from the Montagnais and the Abenakis, some ten or fifteen years ago, was introduced; and considerable impetus was given to the making of snowshoes and moccasins and to the dressing of hides. On an average, 10 to 15,000 hides are cut annually at Lorette. In 1898, 140,000 pairs of moccasins were made, and about 7,000 pairs of snowshoes. Instead of the very small family workshop of old, we now see vaster collective workshops run by outside employers of some means.

Not only do the Huron villagers depend for their support almost entirely on the revenue derived from the various manufacturing industries; but a number quite as large of French Canadians settled in the village of St. Ambroise close by, look to the same pursuits for a living. Snowshoe making is the only industry of the Indians which the Hurons have kept to themselves, not more than two French Canadians being trained in the art.

In turn, this very development of the manufacturing industries reacted on the old forms of labour and caused their further decline. Henceforth, assured of constant employment at easy work, the Hurons gave up almost entirely agriculture, which had long been neglected, and even the chase, which had been dwindling away of late years.

Despite the evolution of their labour system, and notwithstanding a few individual cases of transformation, the Hurons of Lorette as a whole still exhibit traits retained from their primitive social status. For instance, the men, generally speaking,

are not as industrious as the women. They still entertain a dislike for agriculture and steady work. I inquired whether the Huron villagers sought employment at Reid's paper mill near-by. I was told they did not, the reason being principally that "Indians dislike working in factories"; they prefer working at home, or in collective workshops, paid by the piece, and left free to interrupt their work at their fancy.

The forms of labour resorted to by the Iroquois of Caughnawaga, are very different from those in use by the Hurons of Lorette. While the latter community, as we have seen, gets its living almost entirely through the prosecution of a few traditional manufactures which the industrial and commercial evolution has revived, and in which both men and women participate; at Caughnawaga, the men are engaged principally in agriculture, lumbering, quarrying and heavy day labour. It is only of recent years that an industry comparable with that of the Hurons has been introduced: beadwork, carried on by women with material imported from Venice. Lacrosses and snowshoes are also made, but not extensively. The Iroquois of Caughnawaga have the reputation to-day of being hard and steady workers, which the men of Lorette, generally, have not.

This contrast is the more striking in that originally the Iroquois—apart from a slightly superior development of agriculture and a correspondingly inferior development of the chase—possessed a labour system very similar to that of the Hurons, and were broadly speaking of the same social type.

The explanation, to my mind, lies mainly in the diversity of their physical environment for the last two hundred years. See the Hurons, settled at a point of the valley where the arable plain is very narrow, close to a vast mountain and forest tract; the first effect of the advent of the French was to evict the Indians from the fertile belt, to drive them by degrees to the sandy terrace and rugged wilderness at the back, to turn them more completely towards the chase and the industries dependent for their raw material on the chase and the forest; until the day came when the evolution of commerce and industry enabled them to carry on these trades independently of local resources.

On the other hand, see the Iroquois of Caughnawaga, in the centre of a wide plain tillable over its whole extent, far from any

extensive mountain or forest area : the advent of the white settler had not the effect of depriving these Iroquois of arable land (abundant in the vicinity), but it had the effect of cutting them off from their hunting grounds (inextensive and far distant) at the back. Caughnawaga was at an early date encircled by a belt of farm settlements which isolated it from all mountain tracts and restricted the run of the Iroquois. The latter were thus at the outset forced out of the chase, and, at the same time, out of those industries dependent on the chase and the forest. When, many years later, the progress of mechanical arts and transportation agencies made it practicable to carry on manufacturing by means of raw material imported from distant lands, the very tradition of the most important industries (save bead work) no longer subsisted among the Iroquois. Meanwhile the men had been constrained to find other means of living; they had taken to agriculture.

The social observer who visits Caughnawaga is deeply impressed at seeing still attached to almost every home in that extensive village, a plot on which are grown the very crops described by Champlain, Brébeuf and the early explorers as characteristic of the old Huron-Iroquois agriculture: Indian corn, or maize, pumpkins, beans, tobacco and sunflowers, to which potatoes are added.

About one fourth of the population of Caughnawaga, say 100 families, depend mainly on agriculture for a living. Several of these have under cultivation 100 arpents; some thirty families work as much as 200 or 300 arpents.

These modern Iroquois, as is here seen, are very different from the primitive type, with whom agriculture did not develop beyond mere garden work carried on by the women folk.

Primitive communities, accustomed to support themselves through forms of labour which consist in the mere gathering of natural products (through hunting for instance), do not willingly give these up for the more arduous pursuits of agriculture. Some sort of constraint is necessary to bring about the change. In the case of the Iroquois of Caughnawaga, it was the deprivation of their hunting grounds which made agriculture a necessity. At the same time, the depth and general fertility of

the soil of the champaign region. no doubt facilitated their passage from the chase to agriculture.

The physical features of Caughnawaga favoured the development of still other means of living among our Iroquois. The nearness of the River St. Lawrence and of the Lachine rapids enabled them to preserve their old-time expertness in paddling bark canoes through narrow, precipitous, river channels. That, in turn, led them to take employment as carriers for the fur trade companies, at the beginning of this nineteenth century and later on, when the lumber trade set in, to become drivers of rafts and to engage in the lumber camps.

Then again, the outcrops of good building stone on their reserve and the construction, in the vicinity, of railways and bridges, afforded them opportunities for earning good wages at heavy work, and broke them into steady labour. At present about 100 Iroquois get regular employment at various tasks on the works of the Dominion Bridge Company, at Lachine.

While thus acquiring to a great extent the white working-man's ability for heavy labour, the Iroquois of Caughnawaga appear to have lost some of their old aptness for protracted running and marching. Not many years ago after taking a crib down the Lachine rapids and leaving it at the "foot of the current," opposite Montreal, a party of fifteen or sixteen Iroquois would walk back to their village, some nine or ten miles away. Nowadays they wait for the next train. Much the greater part of their travelling is done by rail.

In short, while the conditions of physical and social environment at Lorette both tended to keep the Huron away from agriculture, enabling him up to quite recent times to support himself by hunting, kindred forms of mere gathering labour and small manufacturing industries dependent on these; at Caughnawaga, owing to a very different physical environment, the Iroquois was forced to change, to give up the chase, to break himself into farming and like forms of heavy extractive labour.

To-day, if we consider only the forms of labour by which they support themselves and their fitness for steady work, the Iroquois have come nearer to us, have remained less primitive, less savage, than the Hurons.

## PROPERTY.

In all communities, there is a close relationship between the forms of labour resorted to and the system of property. Thus, primitive races which get their living by the gathering of natural productions (hunting, collecting, etc.,) do not recognize individual ownership of land, which, on the contrary, becomes a basic principle of societies sustaining themselves by extractive forms of labour, and notably, by agriculture.

The ancient Hurons had but a rude, undeveloped, practice of agriculture, and correspondingly their hold on the soil was of a precarious, limited, sort. Their frequent changes of abode are good proof of that. After their removal to the vicinity of Quebec, they did not, as we know, take more energetically to the cultivation of the soil; on the contrary, under the new conditions, they gave up little by little the practice of agriculture. Similarly they did not develop any greater ability to hold land either privately or collectively.

In the year 1651, the king of France had bestowed on the Christian Indians settled in the vicinity of Quebec (of which the Hurons were the nucleus), a grant of land covering three miles in width on the River St. Lawrence by 12 miles in depth. Of course the Hurons were quite unprepared to take advantage, or retain possession, of such an extent of territory, especially in a part of the country where arable land was rather scarce and much sought for. They allowed themselves to be dispossessed piecemeal not only of the land, but of the seigniorial dues attached to it as well, till they found themselves left with holdings totally inadequate for their support and advancement.

The property held by the Hurons of Lorette, or held in trust for them now comprises :

- (1) The Village site :
- (2) Adjoining the latter, a Common, covering 8 or 9 arpents :
- (3) Two miles from the village, the Reserve proper, 1600 arpents (1350 acres) in extent ;
- (4) Some 30 miles back, in the County of Portneuf, the Rocmont Reserve, 9,600 acres in area.

(1) The village plot is subdivided into small lots. Each family is entitled to an area sufficient for a house, besides a width of 30 feet in front and 3 feet at the back of that house.

(2) The Common was originally, as indicated by its French name "Clôs des Cochons," a pasture for hogs. It still continues to be owned in common by the Huron community, but is now used almost entirely as a hide-dressing ground by Mr. Bastien, who has erected thereon sheds and drying scaffolds.

(3) The 1600 arpents Reserve also remains undivided. It was granted to the Hurons that they might obtain from it their annual supplies of fuel. The greater part is still woods. Six or seven families, as we have seen, have taken up their abode there as farmers, but the farming is of such a primitive character, that it has not been found necessary to trace any boundaries between the various farms.

(4) As for the Rocmont Reserve, it is wholly a distant mountainous forest tract, provided in recent times by the Canadian Government for the support of the Hurons, but neither occupied nor worked by them. However, they derive a small revenue from it, the cut of pine and spruce being leased out every year to lumbermen, and the proceeds paid over to the band in the form of allowances.

It should be observed that all of this property is held *in common* by the Hurons. With them private ownership of land does not exist. Neither have they any desire, as far as I could ascertain, to individually own land. I know only of one Huron to-day who holds privately some land—and not in the Reserve, but adjoining it. In the past as well, cases of private ownership have been exceedingly rare.

In connection, then, with the system of property of the Hurons, what strikes most the social observer, is, on the one hand, the limitation and sparseness of their holdings at Lorette, their place of abode; and, on the other hand, the absence of private ownership of land.

At Caughnawaga, things are in a different way. At an earlier date than the Hurons, the Iroquois had to forsake the chase and to take earnestly to agriculture. As a result, they acquired the notion of property, the desire to have, and the aptness to hold, land collectively, or even privately.

They managed to retain possession of part of the seigniori of Sault Saint-Louis, granted in 1681 for them to the Jesuits. It extends nine miles along the river St. Lawrence, and forms one holding of 12,600 acres. A portion conceded to white settlers yields a revenue of several hundred dollars to the Iroquois community.\* Several members of the band have acquired within the Reserve possession of lots covering one hundred or more acres which they transmit freely to their children, although they are debarred from selling or donating them to outsiders. So that as regards the system of property, as well as that of labour, the Iroquois of Caughnawaga have not retained as much as the Hurons of Lorette, of the primitive status and conceptions.

But from this point onwards, the order is reversed. It has just been said that the lands retained by the Hurons at Lorette are limited in extent; the village where most of the families live, covers only a small area. It is situated along a highway which leads to Quebec, and the French Canadian settlements surround it closely, penetrate it as it were. So much so that at many a point on its outskirts, the Huron homes almost touch those of inhabitants of French Canadian parishes.

That situation puts the small Huron community in close and constant intercourse with Canadians. It opens the doors of Huron homes to the notions and usages of the white settlers.

On the other hand, it has been noticed that the Iroquois of Caughnawaga are still the owners of large areas; their reserve of Sault St. Louis is a compact holding of over 12,000 acres in extent. Their village (which, unlike that of Lorette, is not cramped for space) is isolated from the nearest Canadian settlements, in front by the wide and dangerous expanse of the St. Lawrence, in the rear and on each side, by a stretch of almost unoccupied woodland. Caughnawaga is indeed a closed group, a community locked up as it were to the rest of the world, and wherein Iroquois manners and traditions have been preserved as in a hot-house.

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\*Besides there has been set apart for the Iroquois of Sault St. Louis, a reserve covering 18,500 acres, in the township of Doncaster, County of Montcalm. It is as yet wholly a forest tract which the Iroquois do not work. As in the case of the Hurons of Lorette, the cut of timber is leased to outsiders for the benefit of the Iroquois community.

These features of property at Lorette and at Caughnawaga and the diversity of the conditions of neighbourhood resulting therefrom, will enable us to understand the sudden change of front which presently takes place in the social advance of both our types.

At the start, we found that, taking into account the character of the country inhabited, the forms of labour resorted to, fitness for steady work and ability to hold property, in short all that makes up the *means* of living, the Iroquois was not to-day so much of a savage as the Huron, had more than the latter adopted the ways of his white neighbours. It seems that the parallelism should continue throughout the whole social fabric. However such is not the case.

As soon as we take to considering the home life, the family traditions, the tongue spoken, the entire *mode* of living, then of the two, it is the Huron we find to be, the most completely assimilated to us; it is the Iroquois we find keeping aloof in many respects. That will be made clear hereafter.

#### FAMILY.

The most striking feature of the family organization of the ancient Hurons and of the ancient Iroquois, was female clanship. The clans—numbering seven or eight among the Iroquois, and as many or more among the Hurons—were vast groupings of people founded on consanguinity, on a common origin. They were not mere local organizations; they were ramified throughout the country. For instance the clan of the Bear, that of the Deer, or that of the Tortoise, had adherents in all the villages, or at any rate in all of the four nations which made up the Huron confederacy. So that, while the people were, for purposes of livelihood, dispersed in distant villages, and for political purposes, broken up into nations, still they were held fast together by the strong bond of the clan founded on family relationship.

A peculiar character of the Huron-Iroquois clanship was that it existed, and was transmitted, not through the men, but through the women of the tribe or family. The Huron child did not belong to the clan of his father, but to that of his mother. In the same way, the possessions of a deceased Huron chief did not go to his sons, but to his brothers, or to the sons of his



sisters, that is to members of his own clan, to which his own children did not belong.

When I visited Lorette, and later on Caughnawaga, I was anxious to find out whether there was left any trace of the old-time female clanship. At Lorette, not only did I ascertain that the clan was no longer a live institution; but even the memory of it had become very dim. The members of the band whom I questioned on the subject, were not totally ignorant of the clan, but they invariably connected it with male descent. One man, seventy-six years of age, told me he belonged to the clan or "compagnie" of the Deer, because his father had belonged to it. Another claimed to be of the "compagnie" of the Tortoise, also because his father had been of that clan; and to remove my doubts, he added: "How could I belong to a Huron clan through my mother, who was a French Canadian?"

One day, I spent a couple of hours chatting with Thomas Tsioui, a typical old Huron (about 80 years of age), living on the 1600 arpents reserve. Three of his sons still living are hunters as much as conditions permit; he himself spent the greater part of his early life in the woods, and at one time he was a noted long distance runner at the Quebec and Montreal exhibitions. He was very proud of a picture hung up in the best room of his house, a portrait of George IV., a royal gift to Michel Tsioui (my host's father), when as one of the Huron delegation he visited London in 1824. The old man's contention is that the Tsiouis are the only genuine Hurons, all the others being descendants of French Canadians who stole their way into the Huron community. As I objected that the Tsiouis themselves could not claim pure Huron extraction, their mothers and grandmothers in most cases being French Canadian women, the old man argued with great warmth that man, and not woman, the husband, not the wife, made the race. He was seemingly unaware that this was the very opposite of the Huron doctrine, and that his use of such an argument was good proof to me that he was no longer a Huron in respect to some of the fundamental traditions of that people.

At Caughnawaga, on the contrary, I found the tradition of female clanship still quite fresh in the minds of young men as well as old. On one occasion, as I was being rowed across the St. Lawrence by Batiste Canadien and two other Iroquois, I ask-

ed one of them, a man about thirty years of age, if he belonged to any clan. "To the clan of the Wolf," was the prompt reply. "That is because your father belonged to that clan?" I inquired again insidiously. "Oh no," replied the young Iroquois, "my mother belongs to that clan. Clan always goes by the mother, not by the father."

A simple phenomenon which marks the evolution of our Hurons from the patriarchal community and clanship of their ancestors to the restricted family group of to-day, is the adoption of distinct family names, transmitted from father to son. With the ancient Hurons as with the ancient Iroquois, there really did not exist any permanent family names, other than those of the clans. Each individual was given a name descriptive of himself, corresponding to the first name with us, which he did not transmit to his progeny. Each clan had its list of proper names which were its exclusive property; so that every name was not only a personal, but a clan designation as well.\* After the missionaries had converted the Hurons to the Faith, they introduced Christian names. But these Christian names, like the former were not transmissible from father to son.

It was in the early years of the present century, that the Hurons of Lorette began to adopt permanent family names. As for the Iroquois of Caughnawaga, it may be stated that even now, as a rule, permanent family names transmissible from father to son, are not in use. In latter years, some families, from coming into closer contact with the whites, have adopted names which are transmitted from father to son: Jocks, Williams, Patton, Jacobs, Phillips, de la Ronde, de Lorimier, d'Ailleboust, Beauvais, Leclerc, etc. But these are mainly to facilitate intercourse with the whites, and their bearers still continue in the tribe to be designated by their Christian names supplemented by their Iroquois appellation. I made the acquaintance of an Iroquois, 80 years of age, commonly designated to outsiders as "Old Sky." His name is "Rowi Karoniontié"; ("Rowi" for "Louis," the Iroquois being unable to pronounce the letter "L"; Karoniontié meaning "Flying Sky"). Karoniontié's son will not in all probability be known

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\*Ontario Archæological Report, 1900; Connelly.

under the same name. In his childhood he will be designated by his Christian name, to which may be added the mention "Karoniontié hoek," Karoniontié's son, until he himself be given an Iroquois name indicative of the clan to which he belongs. On account of that indefinite nomenclature, it is not always an easy matter to trace the genealogy of an Iroquois.

For several generations past the Hurons have been marrying white women. The French Canadian wife and mother was a potent factor of transformation at Lorette, and, of course, it was in her particular sphere, at the home, in family life, on domestic usages and manners, that her influence was felt most strongly.

Physically, the Huron type has been altered, though not by any means blotted out. The massive build and high stature which, we are told, were prevalent features among the old Hurons, are not now common at Lorette; neither are the cheek bones and nose unduly prominent as a rule; but the rather dark olive complexion, the almond-shaped eyes and the stiff, flat hair are often observed, and perhaps more so in young children than in grown-up people.

The Huron tongue is no longer spoken at Lorette. French has replaced it. Even the older members of the tribe, in answer to my enquiries, had great difficulty in recalling to mind a few disconnected words. As far back as fifty years ago, the Huron tongue was already out of general use here.

As regards the mode of living, that is food, shelter, clothing, hygiene and amusements, the people of Lorette are no longer Hurons; in these respects their habits are very similar to those of the French Canadians of corresponding classes.

Having to purchase the greater quantity of the food they consume, they obtain it from itinerant traders or from dealers who at the same time supply the French Canadians of St. Ambroise. I happened to take a meal at the home of one of the poorest Huron families on the Reserve, and still remember how I enjoyed that simple lunch of milk, butter and bread, cream and fruit, which was daintily served in clean china or glass and on neat linen.

At Lorette, the houses are not commodious, and they are uncomfortably close together; but generally there is an air of

cleanliness about them, and they nearly all appear to be as well kept as the tidiest French Canadian farmer's or mechanic's home.

The old Huron style of dress has been abandoned. I was able to discover only one member of the tribe, a Huron lady in the nineties, who still retained the traditional costume of the last century, the short skirt with the "mitasses," "leggings" and the moccasins.

At Caughnawaga, also there has been much admixture of foreign blood. Although the physical type of the Huron-Iroquois is more commonly met with and more strongly marked here than at Lorette, I am assured that there are not more than two families of pure Iroquois extraction. In olden times, a good many children captured by war parties of Iroquois raiding the New England settlements, were taken to Caughnawaga and adopted by the tribe. Numbers of the Caughnawagans trace their origin to the Williams, the Rices, the Hills, &c., of Yankee stock. At various times and under various pretences, outsiders, French, Scotch and others, and even negroes, filtered into the Reserve and intermarried with the Iroquois. But most of these foreign elements sooner or later were absorbed by the community and their descendants to-day—though in some cases their physique may tell—socially speaking cannot be distinguished from the other members of the band. The Iroquois of Caughnawaga, in contrast with the Hurons of Lorette, instead of being weakened by foreign intrusion, have been strengthened by it.

Iroquois is still the tongue generally spoken here. About one fourth of the population cannot even speak or understand any other. As you leave the train at Adirondack Junction, half an hour after emerging from the noisy thoroughfares of Montreal, with their flow of French and English physiognomies and their clatter of French and English sounds, you are surprised to find yourself suddenly amid people, in physique and language, quite strange.

You are met by massive, swathy workmen who salute as they pass with a guttural "Sego. Sego." You proceed up the long rows of small, wooden houses, interspersed with massive stone ones, and a few of a somewhat more modern and decorative style. Some of these are very neat, but as a rule the homes at Caughnawaga did not seem to me as well kept as those I saw at

Lorette. You enter a few of these homes. The furniture is scanty and rude. Your eye catches quaint objects ; you observe a child attached to one of those portable cradles which figure in the accounts of early explorers. You speak to the occupants ; but they are old-timers, they cannot answer your questions either in English or French, but fix on you strange, inquisitive looks. On leaving the dwelling, you find on the beach outside, young men preparing to cross over to Lachine in their long boats. In voluble language which sounds like Greek to you, they are apparently bantering one another. Should you address these young men, they are well able to answer in broken French or preferably in broken English.

In many houses the women are busy at beadwork. Those met out of doors have all a blanket as head covering, even the young misses who look a little more to style in dress, and wear finely shaped tanned leather boots.

Groups of children are playing on the public square facing the quaint church and the old priest's house, the latter dating back to the last century. The lively chatter they are carrying on in their native dialect, is unexpectedly interrupted now and then by some popular American or English tune.

Is there not an element of pathos in the spectacle of these two groups, originally similar, but in the course of time rendered quite unlike under the sway of conflicting social factors? Is it not instructive and interesting as well, to see that Huron, betwixt the fertile plain and the rugged mountain and forest tract, kept back by the influence of the latter in the lower forms of labour and property, but, as a further result, permeated and transformed in his home life through the influence of the French Canadian communities occupying the fertile belt. Is it not instructive and interesting to see that Iroquois, in the centre of the champaign region, constrained at an early date to give up the chase, to take to agriculture and the heavy forms of extractive labour, but, by the very fact, rendered more independent, more isolated, less open, in his home life, to the usages and conceptions of his white neighbours?

We travel abroad ; we seek distant climes to satisfy a vain curiosity for some common-place marvel : would we not find greater profit and interest in applying part of the energy so spent

to the study of Canada? Would we not in that way put ourselves in a better position to work intelligently and efficiently for the welfare and advancement of the people? Would we not thereby become more enlightened and useful citizens, better Canadians?

The Ottawa Social Science Club, whose representative I have had the honour to be on this year's lecture course of the Literary and Scientific Society, has decided to take up, as a primary feature of its programme of work, the systematic observation and recording of social types and conditions in and about the Capital.

LÉON GÉRIN.



