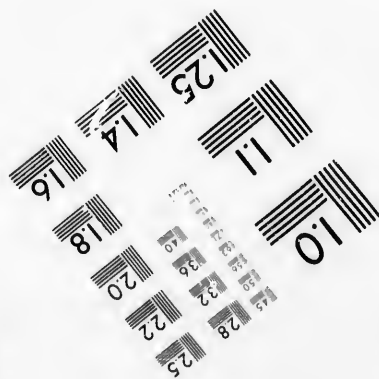
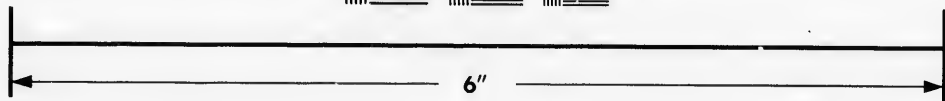
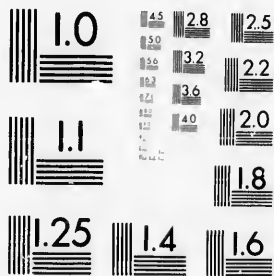


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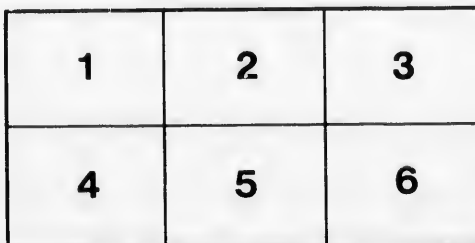
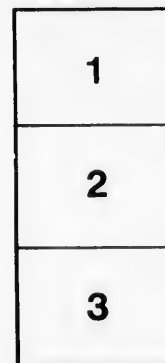
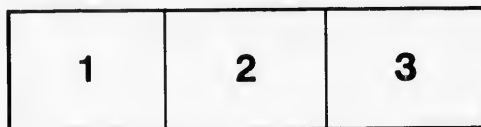
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BY

MARY AGNES FITZGIBBON.



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Woman's Canadian Historical Society of Toronto.

TRANSACTION No. 1.—FEBRUARY, 8TH, 1896.

PREFATORY NOTE.

A RESOLUTION, moved by D. B. Read, Q.C., and seconded by Rev. Dr. Scadding, was passed by the Provincial and Pioneer Association of Ontario, at a meeting held in Toronto, on September 5th, 1895, appointing Mrs. S. A. Curzon and Miss Mary Agnes FitzGibbon a committee to form a WOMAN'S CANADIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY, to be in affiliation with, and having the authorization of, the Provincial and Pioneer Historical Association of Ontario, but reserving to itself all the privileges and responsibilities of a separate and distinct Society, with power to form its own constitution, by-laws, etc.

In pursuance of this resolution, Miss FitzGibbon addressed herself to thirty Toronto women, members

or representatives, by name or descent, of families long resident in the city, requesting their attendance at a meeting to be held on November 19th, 1895.

Twenty-nine responded, expressing sympathy with and interest in the project. Of these, seventeen attended the meeting.

The aim and objects of the proposed Society were explained by Mrs. S. A. Curzon, as subsequently set forth in the preamble of the Constitution; officers were appointed and resolutions passed preliminary to the formulating of a constitution and by-laws for the organization and government of a Society to be known by the name and title of the Woman's Canadian Historical Society of Toronto.

PREAMBLE
OF
CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

Submitted to a meeting composed of fifty-seven members, held, by the
kind courtesy of the Council, in the Canadian Institute
Building, on December 6th, 1895.

The considerations which have led to the formation of the Woman's Canadian Historical Society of Toronto are as follows :

“The rapidly rising status of Canada among the nations of the world ; that a unity of national purpose and a high ideal of loyalty and patriotism in her people will alone sustain her in such high position ; that to this end a thorough acquaintance by her people, both native and immigrant, with her heroic past, is of the first importance ; that her history, literature and archives, her poetry and art are yearly becoming more valuable in affording the necessary knowledge ; that an intelligent and self-respecting national pride in Canadian literature needs to be awakened and encouraged ; that the value of documents, records and relics, both public and private, as notes in the history of a people is not generally realized, and that the collection and preservation of them is most important.”

*

Papers of incorporation were presented to the Society on February 14th, 1896, by T. H. Bull, Esq., Barrister, of Toronto, and a vote of thanks was tendered him by the Society at their first open meeting, held on March 13th, 1896.

When the form of constitution was submitted to the members of the Society by the Executive, no motto was spoken of or selected. Miss FitzGibbon therefore decided to adopt and print the following, "Deeds Speak"; and, in justification of her choice and action in thus taking the duty upon herself without reference to the will of the Society, told the story of its origin, and pleaded its significance as one suitable to be the motto of a historical society of Toronto women.

Miss FitzGibbon's choice was unanimously endorsed, and at a subsequent meeting it was resolved: Moved by Mrs. James Bain, seconded by Mrs. Walton, that "Miss FitzGibbon's paper on the 'Historic Banner' be published as the first transaction of the Woman's Canadian Historical Society of Toronto." Following is the paper:

Madame President and Ladies,—It is my privilege to-day to tell you the story of a historic banner, historic particularly in the annals of Toronto. I am fortunate in being able, through the kindness of its present possessor, the Hon. George Allan, of Moss Park, to show it to you, and thus illustrate my story. The color of the silk is now yellow, and tinder-tinted by age; it once was either crimson or gold color, probably the former. The design embroidered upon

its centre is the Crown Royal of England, supported on either side by the letters "G" and "R" (*Georgius Rex*). Beneath the crown is a wreath of laurel leaves, the green shades still discernible, and the fine stitching in perfect condition. Below this again, also intact, the lettering, "3rd Regiment York Militia," tells for whom the banner was intended, and on a ribbon-like scroll, also embroidered, the words "Deeds Speak"—the motto which I took the liberty of placing upon our printed Constitution as that of the Society, assured of your hearty acquiescence.

In the right-hand corner of the banner are the Royal arms, and in the left the arms of Canada—not the arms of to-day, which bear the quarterings of the confederated Provinces of our Dominion, but those of Old Canada—as seen now only on old coins, deeds, and charters, bearing the cornucopia, or horn of plenty, the anchor, and the sheaf of arrows. For the rest, the silk is torn, frayed and tattered, in many places entirely gone; the fringe faded, but to a great extent intact. Such is the banner which has given us our motto.

When war was declared against Great Britain and her colonies by the United States of America, on June 18th, 1812, Canada was in a less capable condition to defend herself than she is to-day. Her extensive frontier of thirteen hundred miles was without a single well-appointed fortress to oppose the entrance of an invading army. The defence of the Province, entrusted to General Brock, was to be maintained by a slender force of some five thousand men, of whom not more than fifteen hundred were British regulars.

Well might the Commander-in-Chief, Sir George Prevost, believe that, unless large reinforcements were sent speedily from England, there was little hope of the Canadian Provinces being retained to the British Crown. General Brock, although he had but recently been defeated in carrying through the House of Assembly a measure which would enable him to strengthen the militia, and thus put the country into a better state of defence, knew the people better. He believed in the loyalty of the majority, as well as in the ability of a small force, fighting for their homes, to defend them against an invading army ten times their number.

“Everyone with whom I have had an opportunity of conversing,” he writes to Sir George Prevost, on May 16th, “assures me that a good disposition prevails among the people.”

The Militia Bill passed, Brock was still forced to acknowledge that, although every man capable of carrying a musket along the whole line of frontier was prepared to fight to the last to preserve the country from the foe, he had not “a musket more than would suffice to arm part of the militia from Kingston westward.”

If you will also remember that the militia of 1812 were not equipped in any way as well as are the militia of to-day, and that they were without uniforms, regular arms or camp equipages, you will realize that it was their loyalty to Britain which fired them to defend her colony from invasion. Many, animated by a bitter antipathy to the United States and their Government, born of dastardly persecutions

and sufferings at the hands of the Americans before they had sought refuge within the borders of Canada, there to find home and peace under the shadow of the Union Jack, and inspired by gratitude and loyalty to the land thus made their own, were ready to go forth to fight, and, if need be, die in its defence, rather than surrender its soil to the southern foe.

And had the women of the day no share in this,—had they no part to play? We know the worth of our influence now for good or ill, and the devoted loyalty of the women of Canada in 1812 was a strong factor in the preservation of our land to the British Empire. On every page of the history of the U. E. Loyalists, and that of the war of 1812-14, the energy, loyalty, bravery and endurance of the women are written in letters of gold.

“Woman,” says Laurence Oliphant, “is the Divine principle of man,” and well she acted her part during those days of gloom and foreboding. No fear cowed her heart, no selfish thought of the preservation of present home comfort, or dread of the possible loss of her nearest and dearest, hampered the man who was called upon to defend the land. No! she sent him out cheerfully, full of hope and courage, to do his duty as a man; and strengthened by her strong heart and earnest prayers, how well and truly was that duty done!

Of the many instances of this spirit among the women, the working of this banner is one that has a personal interest to us as Toronto women, and still more particularly to many here, who are descendants of those who traced its design, through whose

fingers were drawn the rich silks now faded and frayed. From the reminiscences of one of them, Mary Warren Baldwin, a girl of twenty, who drew the design and helped to work it, we learn that the ladies met in the old McGill-McCutcheon house, which stood then on the site now occupied by the Metropolitan Church. The spot was then high ground, rising above a shallow winding ravine or depression, which, after leaving the shore of the bay, turned eastward at this place toward the Don valley.

The motto, "Deeds Speak," was chosen for them by the Rev. Dr. Strachan, afterwards Bishop of Toronto. General Brock visited them, and commended their work. Mr. McLean (afterwards Judge McLean), Stephen Jarvis, Mr. Robinson (afterwards Chief Justice Sir J. B. Robinson), sat with them, and read aloud "The Battle of Talavera" and other stirring poems, records of hard-fought battles and great victories won.

The battle of Talavera, it will be remembered, was fought in Spain by Wellington and the allies against France and the hitherto victorious generals of Napoleon's great army, on July 27th and 28th, 1809.

These two most hotly contested and sanguinary engagements, ending in a glorious victory, added such laurels to the British flag that Sir Arthur Wellesley was made Viscount Talavera as a mark of his country's gratitude.

Written by Sydney Croker, the talented Secretary of the Admiralty, the first editions of the poem were published anonymously. It, however, was received

with such favor by an admiring public that the sixth edition bore its author's name upon the title-page.

The following extract, copied from a review of the book in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, of January, 1812, will be sufficient to show how the record of deeds done in the Old World might well fire the hearts of the loyal in the New :

“ Oh, for a blaze from heaven to light
 The wonders of that gloomy fight,
 The guerdon to bestow,
 Of which the sullen, envious night
 Bereaves the warrior's brow.
 Darkling they fight, and only know
 If chance has sped the fatal blow,
 Or by the trodden corse below,
 Or by the dying groan :
 Furious they strike without a mark,
 Save now and then the sulphurous spark
 Illumes some visage grim and dark
 That with the flash is gone !
 Promiscuous death around they send,
 Foe falls by foe, and friend by friend,
 Heaped in that narrow plain.
 But with the dawn the victors view
 Ten gallant French, the valley strew,
 For every Briton slain ;
 They view with not unmingled pride,
 Some anxious thoughts their souls divide,
 Their throbbing hopes restrain.
 A fiercer field must yet be tried.
 Hundreds of foes they see have died,
 But thousands still remain.
 From the hill summit they behold,
 Tipped with the morning's orient gold
 And swarming o'er the field,

Full fifty thousand muskets bright
 Led by old warriors trained to fight
 And all in conquest skilled :
 With twice their number doomed to try
 The unequal war, brave souls, they cry :
 Conquer we may, perhaps must die,
 But never, never yield.

Thus ardent they ; but who can tell
 In Wellesley's heart what passions swell,
 What cares must agitate his mind,
 What wishes, doubts and hopes combined,
 Whom with his country's chosen bands,
 'Midst cold allies in foreign lands,
 Outnumb'ring foes surround ;
 From whom that country's jealous call
 Demands the blood, the fame of all—
 To whom 'twere not enough to fall
 Unless with victory crowned.

“ Oh, heart of honor, soul of fire,
 Even at that moment fierce and dire,
 Thy agony of fame !
 When Britain's fortune dubious hung,
 And France tremendous swept along
 In tides of blood and flame ;
 Even while thy genius and thy arm
 Retrieved the day and turned the storm.
 Even at that moment, factious spite*
 And envious fraud essayed to blight
 The honors of thy name.

* The calumniators of Sir Arthur Wellesley have been so industrious in publishing their malignity that it is unnecessary to recall to the public observation any particular instance of it. In reading these base absurdities, one cannot but recollect the expression of Marshall Villars (I think it was) to Louis XIV. : “Sire je vais combattre vos ennemis et je vous laisse au milieu des miens.” Sir Arthur, much worse treated than M. de Villars, says nothing about it, but beats his country's enemies and despises his own.

He thinks not of them : from that height
 He views the scene of future fight,
 And, silent and serene, surveys
 Down to the plain where Teïo stays—
 The woods, the streams, the mountain ways,
 Each dell and sylvan hold ;
 And all his gallant chiefs around
 Observant watch, where o'er the ground
 His eagle glance has rolled.

“ Few words he spake, or needed they,
 Where to condense the loose array
 Or where the line unfold ;
 They saw, they felt, what he would say,
 And the best order of that day,
 It was his eye that told.
 Prophetic to each chief he shows
 On wing or centre, where the foes
 Will pour their fury most ;
 Points out what portion of the field
 To their advance 'twere good to yield,
 And what must not be lost.
 ‘ Away, away ! the adverse power,
 Marshals and moves his host.
 ’Tis come, ’tis come, the trial hour,
 Each to his destined post.
 And when you charge, be this your cry,
 Britons strike home, and win or die—
 The grave or victory ! ’ ”

This was no idle tale to these women, for before the banner was presented to the regiment many of them mourned the loss of friends—one the death of her lover and affianced husband,—and all had wept over the grave of the man to whose memory, of all others, Canada owes a debt of gratitude to-day. The

battle and victory of Queenston Heights had been fought and won.

The following simple but pathetic account of the presentation is also lent me by the Hon. George Allan. The page is faded and yellow, the print faint, and the type of the last century renders it difficult to decipher. There is no date nor name of the paper of which it has once formed a part or page, but from the context we may gather the presentation took place sometime at the end of the year 1812, or during the early days of 1813:

EXTRACT.

“The gallant achievement at Detroit in the beginning of this war, if it excited admiration in the Mother Country, failed not to make an equal impression on the inhabitants of this province.

“The portion of the 3rd Regiment of York Militia embodied in the flank companies, whom fortune made sharers in the glory of that exploit, were gratefully thanked for the faithful discharge of their duty, and the young ladies, with a fervor of patriotism literally above commendation, had prepared a banner which it was their intention to present to the regiment immediately upon the return of the volunteers from that expedition.

“But the sudden recommencement of hostilities rendered the late General Brock’s presence for a time impossible, and subsequent events, the recollection of which it is painful to recall, occasioned a delay of their intention.

“Sir Roger Hale Sheaffe, having it in his power to honor the ceremony with his presence this day, was appointed for the purpose, and at one o’clock the regiment was drawn up in front of the church at open order to receive and salute the General and his suite as they passed. The Evening Service was read by the Rev. Dr. Strachan, and an appropriate sermon delivered from the following text: ‘Give thanks unto the Lord, and call upon his name; make known his deeds among the people.’

"The 3rd Regiment and all the respectable inhabitants of the town attended. They who heard it will not readily forget the matter nor the manner, and those who were not there could receive little satisfaction from any account of a discourse which derived much of its effect from the earnest sincerity so conspicuous in the preacher.

"It was visibly and sincerely lamented by the regiment and by every spectator, that a misfortune at any time melancholy, but at the present instance peculiarly distressing, prevented Colonel Chewett from assisting at a ceremony, the anticipation of which had afforded him much honest pride. Major Allan, on that day, commanded the regiment.

"Dr. Strachan, after his discourse was ended, resumed the surplice, and ascending a stage which had been erected near the pulpit for the occasion, requested the young ladies who had wrought the standard for the 3rd York Militia to approach with the person whom they had chosen to present it.

"The Rev. Dr. Strachan then consecrated the regimental colors and the standard to be presented by the ladies, which were supported by Lieutenants George Ridout and Samuel Jarvis, of the 3rd Regiment.

"Decorum forbids me the liberty of exhibiting in this place to the admiration of the public the impressive prayer used on the occasion by the Reverend Doctor.

"When it was ended, Miss Powell, daughter of the Hon. Mr. Justice Powell, presented the colors (standard?) to the Major, with this short but elegant and animated address, spoken in a manner so amiable and unaffectedly diffident, and in a tone so interestingly appropriate to the sentiments, to the occasion and to the fair presenter, that it infinitely heightened the solemnity, and increased (I speak from my own feelings) the rapture of the scene :

"The young ladies of York, in presenting a banner to you, their brave and successful defenders, perform a duty most grateful to their own feelings.

"They are proud to imitate the example of the most distinguished of their sex ; among the most virtuous and heroic nations who have rejoiced in giving public testimony of their gratitude to their countrymen—returning from victory—receive then this ensign

of union as a token of their lasting esteem and the harbinger of increasing glory.

“‘Receive it as a proof that they strongly participate in that generous patriotism which burns with so pure a flame through the Province, and when you behold it unfurled on the day of battle, let it become a kind remembrancer of the unlimited confidence which they place in the efficiency of your protection.’

“The Major received the colors, which he committed to ensigns Charles Denison and Edward Thompson, the junior officers of the regiment, and returned to the lovely donors of them this reply :

“‘*Mesdames*,—This regiment of militia receive from the young ladies of York, with the most grateful acknowledgment, this consecrated banner, deeply sensible of the powerful additional claims which a favor so precious gives to our best exertions in defence of this happy province.

“‘The recollection of this day shall awaken in our bosoms the deepest affections of the soul, and shall animate us with a spirit which, by Divine assistance, shall completely shield you from every danger ; and when we look at your gift waving in the battle, the remembrance of our fair benefactors shall fasten on our hearts, and the flattering confidence which you place in the efficiency of our protection shall not be disappointed.’

“Here the ceremony ended, the regiment formed again without the church, and were honored by this flattering address from Sir Roger :

“‘I congratulate the 3rd Regiment of the York Militia on possessing these honorable, these sacred banners, and rejoice to see them under the protection of men who have already encountered the enemy and gloriously triumphed over them, and when you shall be called to rally round them to defend, not only them but all beside that is precious to you, I am confident that you will give new proofs of your courage and patriotism, and that you will reap fresh laurels and add to the victories and renown which you have already won.’

“After His Honor had left the ground, Major Allan addressed the following appropriate speech to his regiment :

“‘*Gentlemen of the 3rd Regiment of York Militia*,—Permit me to express the great satisfaction I feel in meeting you upon this occasion. The inestimable gift conferred upon you by the young ladies

of York must awaken the most lively gratitude in every bosom, and suggest new motives for redoubled efforts for resisting the enemy. They rely on our conduct and courage, not merely in defending the banner which they have presented, but in making it the admonisher of the most important services in support of our King and country; and you are not to suppose that this religious dedication of your colors is an unmeaning ceremony, for they become a token and pledge of a most solemn engagement, not only between us and our sovereign, who calls us to arms, but between us and our fellow-subjects, for whose protection we are employed, especially of that tender and most amiable sex who have consigned them to our hands, and who zealously hope that we will never abandon them but with life.

“It is our part to realize these grateful expectations, and to show that they have not been consecrated by words only, but by our hearts, and by the noble and heroic spirit which the sight of them shall always awaken in our hearts.

“The enemy against whom we contend are loud in their threats, and enraged at the unexpected resistance which they have already experienced in this province; they will wreak the bitterest vengeance upon us should they prove victorious, but they can never be victorious while we are united; on the contrary, they will continue daily to receive bloody proofs that a country is never more secure than when defended by its faithful, loyal and industrious inhabitants, who have constantly before their eyes the tenderest pledges of nature, and are influenced by all that is dearest and most interesting to the human heart.

“March, then, under these colors, inspired by that pure honor which characterizes the Christian soldier, which inspires him with reverence for religion and loyalty to his sovereign, makes him a devouring flame to his resisting enemy, and a humane protector of the fallen, and it will be the most pleasing joy of our declining years to remember that we have made a noble use of the opportunity now presenting of contributing to the defence, the safety and the glory of this highly favored portion of the British Empire.’

“The colors were then escorted by the Grenadier Company, the band playing ‘The British Grenadiers,’ to the Major’s quarters, where they were deposited.

“The scene which I have thus imperfectly described is one in

which the mind alone is concerned, and which derives its grandeur purely from the principle which pervades it; external magnificence is not essential to its sublimity, nor can add to or diminish from its interest. The oppressor has frequently offered up thanksgiving for his triumph over freedom, and the conquerors' *Te Deum* has been often mingled with the cries of murdered citizens, but here was an assemblage of persons who had been lately called from the enjoyment of every peaceful blessing to defend their property and rights from an unprovoked invasion, and who were now met to bless and adore their Creator for the success which had hitherto attended them in every effort of resistance, and consecrate to Him a symbol intended to strengthen their unanimity and add life to their ardor through the continuance of the war."

Thus was the banner presented to and received by the regiment. Owing to the inexplicable conduct of Sir James Yeo, in the early spring of 1813, in putting back into Kingston with his vessels and thus enabling the American fleet, under Commander Chauncey, to sail out of Sackett's Harbor unmolested, York was besieged and taken by the enemy on April 27th.

In no instance of the war was bad generalship more conspicuous than in this surrender of York.

How well the handful of Indians under Major Givins fought in defence of the landing of the enemy under General Pike, by some mistake supported too late by but sixty of the Glengarry Fencibles, and later by two hundred and twenty militiamen, of whom the 3rd Regiment formed a part; how the company of the 8th, or King's Regiment, under Captain McNeil, was cut to pieces and, unsupported, was forced to retreat, is history, much of the true inwardness of which is yet to be learned.

General Sheaffe ordered the retreat on Kingston, shortly after which the magazine at the fort was blown up by accident or design—the latter being the most probable, in view of the fact that Major Givins sent an orderly to warn his family at Pine Grove, the house nearest to the fort, to seek safety in the cellar, as the Americans were victorious, and the British, being obliged to retreat, were going to blow up the fort in the endeavor to rob the enemy of the fruits of their victory.

From the late Miss McNab, of Hamilton, sister of Sir Allan McNab, of Dundurn, I learned much of the history of that eventful day. She remembered Dr. Strachan coming to her father's house with the tidings (brought from Scarboro' Heights by the lookout man stationed there) of the approach of the American fleet. Her father's impetuous exclamation when told that Sheaffe was in command, of "Then all is up with the town, for Sheaffe is no commander!" had left an indelible impression upon her mind.

Numbers of women and children, herself among them, had sought refuge in the old McGill house, which, from its position on the rising ground north of the road and sheltered by the forest behind, was less exposed than the houses nearer the bay.

Mrs. Seymour (*née* Miss Powell, then a child of six) remembers being sent to watch from one of the upper windows and seeing the British flag lowered and the Stars and Stripes run up in its place, while Miss McNab recalled with excitement the retreat of the regulars, and how later Mr. McLean burst into the

drawing-room with the banner the ladies had worked wrapped about his body for concealment, and remembered the storm raised by Miss Powell's bitter words of indignation and her taunt that after all their protestations the men had sent the banner back for the women to protect.

Stung to the quick, Mr. McLean, whose personal courage was undoubted, vowed he would return and face the victorious enemy rather than endure such words. He turned and would have dashed out again, but was stayed, and Dr. Strachan, learning that he had not been with the men who had surrendered at the fort, and had therefore no promise or parole to break, induced him to take a horse from Mr. McGill's stable, follow and join the retreating Sheaffe at Kingston.

I am indebted to Miss McLean, a daughter of this Mr. McLean (afterwards Chief Justice), for a corroborative account of the following particulars: "They buried the banner under a tree in the orchard behind the house, first wrapping it in an old bit of canvas," said Miss McNab.

"Hearing that the enemy was coming, Mr. McLean ran out with it and buried it in the forest behind the house," writes Miss McLean. How Mr. McLean had obtained possession of the banner does not appear. Ensigns Thompson and Charles Denison, to whose charge it had been entrusted, are enumerated in the articles of capitulation of York, and it is probable that when they found surrender was inevitable, they managed to convey the banner to McLean in time to save it from the disgrace of capture. He, either in

obedience to their wish or from true instinct, brought it back to the women who had worked it.

After the evacuation of York by the Americans the banner was restored to the regiment, and was carried through every engagement in which it took part.

After the close of the war, in 1815, the lapse of years of peace lessened the necessity of keeping up the militia, and the 3rd York Regiment, although continuing for many years to hold its annual parade on the 4th of June, King George the Third's birthday, by subsequent changes made in the militia, soon existed only on paper.

After the death of Colonel Duggan the banner was lost sight of, and it is due only to the determined and persevering search of years that we have it here to-day.

The Hon. George Allan, ably assisted by Mr. Henry Duggan, ultimately discovered it, together with the Queen's colors, in the attic of the Normal School, forgotten, tattered and discolored.

He had them conveyed to his home, and to a woman we owe the present state of preservation of our banner.

Mrs. Allan, with clever ingenuity and deft fingers, spread it on a breadth of white net, placed the worked design in its original position, covered it all with a second width of net, and by stitching it through kept it intact; then, sewing the fringe round the outer edge, preserved the remains as we have them to-day.

Need I say more to justify my choice of our motto, taken from a banner worked by women, to hearten the men in defence of their homes, cared for

in its hour of danger, and, finally, preserved to our sight to-day by a woman?

May we act up to it, and by our efforts to preserve the history of the days when it was worked, fire the hearts of the future with the loyalty to crown and country which burned so brightly then, and be worthy to bear upon our escutcheon the words

“Deeds Speak.”

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