

fact, a problem of serious difficulty; since we need another point for establishing a base-line from which distances may be reckoned to our entire satisfaction. I trust, however, to show that this difficulty is not insuperable.

Nearly all the distances mentioned in the old records are given in leagues; but these distances are not mathematically accurate,—they were never actually measured, and, consequently, are but approximate. They are, moreover, often modified by such expressions as *environ, une petite lieüe, deux grandes lieües*, etc. It is well known, also, that leagues of different lengths were in use in France,—varying both at different periods, and in different parts of the country. Clifton-Grimaux (London and Paris, last ed.) makes the “league” equivalent to four kilometers, or 2.4233 English miles; the “posting league,” to 2,000 toises, or 3,898.07 meters, or 2.4221 English miles; the “marine league” (twenty to a degree of longitude), to 5,556 meters, or 3.45 statute miles, or three geographical miles. Worcester (Boston, 1882) states that the “common league” of France is equivalent to 2.76 statute miles, and the “legal league” to 2.42 of these. As for the estimates of distance made in the *Relations*, they were not only approximate, but must also have been more or less affected by various circumstances,—as the familiarity of the writers with the region in question, inequalities in its surface, greater or less difficulty in the trail followed, and its deviations resulting from lakes, hills, or other natural obstructions.

The prevailing opinion that Indian villages were generally remote from the lake-shore, or from watercourses, so as to escape observation, seems to me baseless, especially if it be formulated as a rule for general application; the choice of location must have depended upon various circumstances. Powerful tribes had little hesitation in selecting prominent sites for their villages, as witness the Iroquois “castles” along the Mohawk River. Moreover, I find no mention made of any contrary practice. When a tribe had encountered a long series of reverses, we can easily understand that it might strive to establish its transient dwellings in more secluded spots; but such was the case with the Hurons during only the last few years preceding their expulsion from their old homes. Sagard, who had lived among these tribes, gives some hints as to the locations of their villages,—of which, in his time, there were about twenty-five, large and small,—in his *Grand Voyage* (Tross ed.), p. 80. These were strongholds, he tells us, not only on account of their artificial defenses,—palisades and barred gateways,—but also because of the configuration of the ground. “The Hurons chose a site with fine discrimination, that it should be in close proximity to some convenient stream; on an eminence, and surrounded, if