

ments extended from New Amsterdam (New York) on the south, to Albany on the north, mainly along the Hudson river, but there are well defined evidences of their early occupation of what is now western Vermont, and also part of Massachusetts; and at the same time they also advanced their outposts along the Mohawk valley toward the region of old Tryon county.

CHAPTER III.

The Indian Occupation — The Iroquois Confederacy — The Five and Six Nations of Indians — Location and Names — Character and Power of the League — Social and Domestic Habits — The Mohawks — Treatment of the Jesuit Missionaries — Discouraging Efforts at Civilization — Names of Missionaries — Alliance with the English — Downfall of the Confederacy.

AFTER the establishment of the Dutch in the New Netherlands the region now embraced within the state of New York was held by three powers — one native and two foreign. The main colonies of the French (one of the powers referred to) were in the Canadas, but through the zeal of the Jesuit missionaries their line of possessions had been extended south and west of the St. Lawrence river, and some attempts at colonization had been made, but as yet with only partial success. In the southern and eastern portion of the province granted to the Duke of York were the English, who with steady yet sure advances were pressing settlement and civilization westward and gradually nearing the French possessions. The French and English were at this time, and also for many years afterwards, conflicting powers, each studying for the mastery on both sides of the Atlantic; and with each succeeding outbreak of war in the mother countries, so there were renewed hostilities between their American colonies. Directly between the possessions of the French and the territory of the English lay the lands of the famous Iroquois confederacy, then more commonly known as the Five Nations. By the French they were called the "Iroquois," but by the Dutch they were known as the "Maquas," while the English called them "Mingoes;" but however variously they may have been desig-

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nated, they were a race of savages whose peculiar organization, prowess on the field of battle, loyalty to friends, as well as barbarous revenge upon enemies, together with eloquent speech and stoical endurance of torture, have surprised all who are conversant with their history.

When, during the latter part of the fifteenth and the early part of the sixteenth century, the foreign navigators visited the American continent, they found it in the possession of two formidable races of savages, between whom there was no unity; and yet while open hostility was suppressed, they were nevertheless in a constant state of disquiet, each being jealous of the other and at the same time doubtful of its own strength and fearful of the results of a general war. One of the nations occupied the region of the larger rivers of Pennsylvania, and also that on the south and west. They were known as the Delawares to the Europeans, but styled themselves "Lenni Lenapes," meaning "Original People." The other nation occupied, principally, the territory which afterwards formed the state of New York, and is known in history as the "Iroquois Confederacy," or the Five (and subsequently) the Six Nations.

Their confederacy originally comprised five nations which were located from east to west across the territory which now forms our state, beginning with the Mohawks on the extreme east, the Oneidas next, and the Onondagas, Cayugas and Senecas following in the above named order. Each of these nations was divided into five tribes, and all were united in common league. Parkman says: "Both reason and tradition point to the conclusion that the Iroquois originally formed one individual people. Sundered, like countless other tribes, by dissensions, caprice, or the necessities of a hunter's life, they separated into five distinct nations." The central council fire of the confederacy was with the Onondagas, while to the Mohawks, according to Clark, was always accorded "the high consideration of furnishing the war captain (Chief Tckarahogea), which distinguishing title was retained so late as 1814."

The government of this remarkable confederacy was exercised through councils, in which each nation was represented by deputies or sachems. In their peculiar blending of the individual, the tribal and the national interests lay the secret of the immense power which for more than a century resisted the hostile efforts of the French, which

caused them for nearly a century to be alike courted and feared by the contending French and English colonies, and which enabled them to subdue the neighboring Indian tribes, until they became really the dictators of the continent, gaining indeed the title of "The Romans of the New World." Dewitt Clinton speaking on this subject said, "They reduced war to a science, and their movements were directed by system and policy. They never attacked a hostile country till they had sent out spies to explore and designate its vulnerable points, and when they encamped they observed the greatest circumspection to guard against surprise. Whatever superiority of force they might have, they never neglected the use of stratagem, employing all the crafty wiles of the Carthaginians." There is, however, a difference in the opinions of authors as to the true military status of the Iroquois. In the forest they were a terrible foe, while in an open country they could not successfully contend with disciplined soldiery; but they made up for this deficiency, to a large degree, by their self-confidence, vindictiveness and insatiable desire for ascendancy and triumph.

While the Iroquois were undoubtedly superior in mental capacity and more provident than their Canadian enemies, and other tribes, there is little indication that they were ever inclined to improve the condition in which they were found by the Europeans. They were closely attached to their warrior and hunter life, and devoted their energies to the lower, if not the lowest forms of enjoyment and gratification. Their dwellings, even among the more stationary tribes, were rude, their food coarse and poor, and their domestic habits and surroundings unclean and barbarous. Their dress was ordinarily the skins of animals until the advent of the whites, and was primitive in character. Their women were degraded into mere beasts of burden, and while they believed in a Supreme Being, they were powerfully swayed by superstition, by incantations, by "medicine men," dreams and visions, and their feasts were exhibitions of debauchery and gluttony.

Such, according to our sincere belief, are some of the more prominent characteristics of the race encountered by Champlain when he came into the Iroquois country near three centuries ago, and welcomed them with the first volley of bullets, a policy that was pursued by all his civilized successors. It is not denied that the Indians possessed a

few redeeming characteristics, but they were so strongly dominated by their barbarous manner of life and their savage traits, that years of faithful missionary labor by the Jesuits and others were productive of but little real benefit. It may be added that whatever is true of any of the Five Nations, or (as they became in 1712) the Six Nations, is equally true of all others. The Mohawks occupied the region of eastern and northern New York, and it is with them that we have particularly to deal in this narrative. They were, perhaps, as peaceful and domestic as any of the confederacy, yet all the early efforts for their civilization and conversion to Christianity were uncertain and discouraging. No strong, controlling influence for good was ever obtained among them prior to the time of Sir William Johnson, and even then it is doubtful whether they were not moved more by the power of purchase than by love of rectitude.

When Champlain opened the way for French dominion in America the task of planting Christianity among the Indians was assigned to the Jesuits, a name derived from the Society of Jesus founded by Ignatius Loyola in 1539; but while their primary object was to spread the gospel, their secondary and scarcely less important purpose was to extend the French dominion. In 1736 Canada was restored to France, and within three years from that date there were fifteen Jesuits in the province. They rapidly increased and extended their influence to a large number of the Indian nations in the far west, but more particularly to the Mohawks and the Senecas, whose land lay on the west of the "long house" of the Iroquois. As early as 1654, during a temporary peace between the French and the Five Nations, Father Bablon founded a mission and built a chapel in the Mohawk valley, but when war was resumed the Jesuits were forced to flee. Between 1657 and 1769 twenty-four missionaries labored among the Iroquois Indians, but we are directly interested only in those who sought converts among the Mohawks. Isaac Jogues was one of these, whose career in the Indian country forms one of the most thrilling chapters of history. He was held by the Mohawks as a prisoner from August, 1642, to the same month of the next year, and labored as a missionary with the same nation in 1646, in October of which year he was killed. Simon Le Moyne labored with the Mohawks about two months in 1655, and again in 1656, and

also the third time from August, 1657, to May, 1658. Frances Joseph Bressani was imprisoned by the Mohawks about six months in 1644.

Julien Garnier was sent to them in May, 1668, and passed on to the Onondagas and Senecas. Jacques Bruyas came from the Onondagas to the Mohawks in July, 1667. He left for the Oneidas in September and returned in 1672, continuing in service several years. Jacques Fremin came in July, 1667, and remained about a year. Jean Perron was sent in the same year, and he also remained about a year. Francis Boniface labored with the Mohawks from 1668 to 1673, when he was succeeded by Francis Vaillant De Gueslis. These faithful missionaries were followed in later years by such noble workers as Talbot, Henry Barclay, John Ogilvie, ——— Spencer, Timothy Woodbridge, Gideon Hawley, Eleazer Wheelock, Samuel Kirkland, Bishop Hobart, Eleazer Williams, Dan. Barnes (Methodist), and others of less distinction, all of whom labored faithfully, but with varied perseverance for the conversion of the Iroquois. All, however, were forced to admit that their efforts as a whole were unsatisfactory and discouraging. Even subsequent efforts to establish education and Christianity among the Indians, while yielding perhaps sufficient results to justify their prosecution, have constantly met with discouraging obstacles.

The advent of the European nations was the forerunner of the downfall of the Iroquois confederacy, and doubtless will lead to the ultimate extinction of the race. The French invasion of 1693, together with that of three years later, cost the confederacy half its warriors. Their allegiance to the British (with the exception of the Oneidas), in the revolutionary war proved to be a dependence on a falling power, and this in connection with the relentless vengeance of the American colonists broke up the once powerful league, and either scattered its members to a large extent upon the friendly soil of Canada, or left them at the mercy of the state and general government, which consigned them to reservations with very imperfect provisions for their amelioration.