

ministry of the Five Nations who has gained his office otherwise than by merit; and there is not the least salary or any sort of profit annexed to any office to tempt the covetous or sordid; but on the contrary, every unworthy action is attended with the forfeiture of their commission; for their authority is only the esteem of the people, and ceases the moment that esteem is lost. *Here we see the natural origin of all power and authority among a free people.*"

"They strictly follow one maxim, formerly used by the Romans to increase their strength, that, is they encourage the people of other nations to incorporate with them; and when they have subdued any people, after they have satisfied their revenge by some cruel example, they adopt the rest of their captives, who, if they behave well become equally esteemed with their own people."

Of their form of government, and the important part of the women in public affairs, Charlevoix says: "The government, extremely complicated, was composed of three councils; the council of deputies (assistants) the council of old men, and the council of warriors."

"I very frequently sent a member to the council of deputies, this member was named by the women, who often sent a woman to represent them. This was the supreme council. Thus the chief power was in the hands of the women. . . . "But the council of old men pronounced finally, and before them were brought the deliberations of the council of deputies."

"The Iroquois thought that they should not deprive themselves of the aid of a sex whose discriminating and ingenious mind is fertile in resources."—(Voyage en Amérique.)

"These nations," says Lahontan, "are free to the whole extent of natural right; and it seems that liberty, almost banished from the earth, has chosen her retreat and a asylum among them" (Lahontan, letter 5 18th June, 1684)

A government like this could never have been formed by a number of mere wandering, fighting, hunting savages. It indicates a long period of peace and plenty and settled habitation. All early writers agree that it was impossible, after reviewing the political ability and institutions of the Iroquois, to call them by the unqualified name of savages. Colden called them the "Romans of the New World."

In 1608 Champlain formed an alliance, offensive and defensive, with the Algonquins and Hurons against the Iroquois. He himself levelled the first fire-arm aimed at an Indian in Canada—an arquebus loaded with four balls, which killed three Iroquois chiefs. (Voyages dans la Nouvelle France par le Sieur de Champlain.) This unjustifiable act upon a people with whom they might have lived and traded in peace brought upon the French all the miseries of a hundred and fifty years of Indian warfare. Though Champlain was horrified at the cruelty of his allies towards their prisoners, and ended the sufferings of the first he saw at the stake by a shot from his arquebus, the French soon grew familiar with such scenes; and, throughout the war with the Iroquois, encouraged and aided the barbarities of their allies. The same course was often followed by the puritans of New England; and thus Champlain's early and good advice—"by showing a good example to the Indians, to induce them to alter their customs"—was nowhere acted upon.

"The Dutch," says Colden, "who settled in the New Netherlands, now called New York, in 1609, entered into an alliance with the Five Nations, which continued without breach on either side till the English gained this country. The Dutch gained the hearts of the Five Nations by their kind usage, and were frequently useful to the French, in saving those of them that were prisoners from the cruelty of the Indians."

"In 1664 New York being taken by the English, they likewise immediately entered into a friendship with the Five Nations, which has continued without the least breach to this day; (1727) and history, I believe, cannot give an instance of the most Christian or most Catholic kings observing a treaty so strictly, and for so long a time, as these barbarians, as they are called, have done."

At this time the Iroquois, besides maintaining the war against the allied French, Hurons and Algonquins, carried their arms over the country extending from Canada to Carolina, and westward to the Mississippi. The names of Ohio and Kentucky, Ontario and Niagara, and many others, a line in their language remain in proof of the extent of their expeditions. Prior to their war with the Algonquins they were regarded by surrounding nations as a peaceful people whose resentment was not to be feared. They were for some time constantly beaten by the Algonquins. But when their perseverance and intelligence had at last enabled them almost to destroy their enemies, they extended their conquests on every side. All the neighbouring tribes paid a yearly tribute to them in wampum (beads made from shells), and presumed neither to make peace nor war without their consent. "Two old men," Colden tells us, "commonly go about every year or two to receive this tribute; and I have often had opportunity to observe what anxiety the poor Indians were under while these two old men remained in that part of the country where I was. An old Mohawk sachem, in a poor blanket and dirty shirt, may be seen issuing his orders with an arbitrary authority as a Roman dictator."

Even when at peace with the French, the Five Nations continued the war against the Indians of the Lakes, and thus seriously interrupted the profitable trade between the Lake basin and the Province of New France.

In 1684 (peace having lasted some time between the French and the Iroquois) the Five Nations were assembled at Albany to meet Lord Howard, when complaints arrived from the French Governor of Canada of their interference with the French trade. Upon the Iroquois being made aware of these complaints, they replied: "He" (the Governor of Canada) "not only permits his people to carry ammunition, guns, powder, lead and axes to the Iroquois or their enemies, but sends them hither on purpose. These guns which he sends knock our beaver hunters on the head, and our enemies carry the beavers to Canada that we would have brought to our brethren. Our beaver hunters are warriors and could bear this no longer. They met some French in their way to our enemies, and very near them, carrying ammunition, which our men took from them" (Colden.)

The Governor of Canada (de la Barre) went to Cataragui (near Kingston) at the head of a force of 1,700 French and Indians for the purpose of chastising the Five Nations; but his army being much reduced by sickness, he crossed Lake Ontario, intending to impress the Iroquois with a belief and fear of the power of the King of France. He was met by Garan-