

SKETCH OF THE  
LIFE OF CAPTAIN JOSEPH BRANT.

(THAYENDANAGA.)

BY KE-CHE-AH-GAIL-ME-QUA.

Ever since the advent of the European to America's soil, nearly four centuries ago, the extermination of the Indian tribes and nations has been going on. With the exodus of Europeans to America came death to the hardy and numerous aboriginal tribes. In South America we cannot number the nations extirpated by the Spanish conqueror. History gives but a faint idea of the number of red men who, in North America, have passed away before the cruel hand of war. Diseases before unknown to the Indian have likewise carried off their thousands. The gain to the nations of the world in the steady march of civilization westward, has not been counterbalanced by a corresponding improvement in the condition of the American Indian. Disinherited of their lands, in the majority of cases by foul means, the Indians find themselves to-day stripped of all but a miserable remnant of their once glorious patrimony, and the inheritors of the many vices and diseases of their white exterminators.

We owe a long debt of gratitude to the poor Indian. It is high time for Christian philanthropists to think of their duty to the few remaining tribes of red men; and, while studying the forms which the human intellect has developed among them, interpose to raise and elevate them in the scale of civilization.

Many bright examples are on record proving that the Indian mind is capable of a high state of civilization. The subject of this paper, Captain Joseph Brant, known by the name of Thayendanagea, pronounced Ti-yan-te-na-ga, is a wonderful instance of what Indian intellect can accomplish when sharpened and polished by intercourse with the better class of European so-

cially our beautiful town of Brantford, or, as it was formerly called, Brant's-ford, known as the spot where Brant first forded the Grand River, named after this brave chieftain, his memory and history should be honored and cherished with gratitude by its inhabitants.

Joseph Brant, or more correctly Thayendanagea, was born in 1742; he was the son of Tewaghwengaraghkin, (pronounce it if you can), a full-blooded Mohawk of the Wolf Tribe. His parents resided in the valley of the Mohawk, New York State, and were on an expedition to the Ohio River when Joseph was born. While Joseph was a mere lad his father died, after which event his mother returned with two children,—Molly and Joseph—to their old home in Canajoharie. Shortly after this the mother married a respectable Indian called Carrihoga, whose Christian name was Barnet, by corruption Brant. It is reported that the future brave warrior chief was first known by the appellation of "Brant's Joseph," and, in process of time, by the name of "Joseph Brant." In the *London Chronicle* for July, 1776, it is stated that he was the grandson of one of the five sachems who came to England in 1710, during the reign of

Queen Anne. Chieftainship among the Six Nation Indians is not always hereditary; yet there is no doubt Joseph Brant was of noble blood.

When only thirteen he entered the war-path at the memorable battle of Lake George, under the command of General Hendrick. This gallant officer was slain in this engagement. This victory over the French laid the foundation of Sir W. Johnson's fame, for which he was created a baronet.

In relating the particulars of this engagement to Rev. Dr. Stuart some years after, the youthful warrior acknowledged:—"This being the first action at which I was present, I was seized with such a tremor when the firing began that I was obliged to take hold of a small sapling to steady myself; but after the discharge of a few volleys I recovered the use of my limbs and the composure of my mind so as to support the character of a brave man, of which I was especially ambitious." Brant was no doubt a warrior by nature. "I like," he said once in after life, "the harpsichord well, the organ better, but the drum and trumpet best of all, for they make my heart beat quick."

From all accounts, he must have been a lad of uncommon enterprise, giving early promise of those eminent qualities which were developed in the progress of a life of varied and important action. About the year 1760, after engaging with Sir W. Johnson in several campaigns of the bloody French War, he was placed by his patron in an institute in Lebanon, Connecticut, called the Moore School, to receive an English education. It is an interesting fact that Sir W. Johnson subsequently married Molly Brant, a sister of Joseph.

After leaving the seminary, where he attained considerable proficiency in the rudiments of education, he again engaged in active warfare, and was employed in the war with Pontiac and the Ottawas, the particulars of which struggles are not recorded. In the year 1765, he married the daughter of an Onondaga chief, and settled in his own house in the Mohawk valley. Here, for some years, he spent a quiet life, acting as interpreter between his people and the whites, and lending his aid to missionaries in teaching the Indians. Brant was noted for his hospitality. About this time the conversion and civilization of the Indians engaged much attention. Sir W. Johnson, and the Rev. Mr. Inglis, drew the attention of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel to the necessity of having missionaries of the Church of England resident among the Mohawks. In 1770, the society ordained a missionary exclusively for the Mohawks, with his residence at Fort Hunter. The Rev. John Stuart was the clergyman selected for this arduous and self-denying work. Capt. Brant assisted Mr. Stuart in the translation of a portion of the New Testament. Dr. Stuart writes concerning this labor as follows:—"During the winter of 1771, I first became acquainted with Capt. Brant. He lived at the Mohawk village, Canajoharie, about thirty miles distant from Fort Hunter. On my first visit to the village where he lived, I found him comfortably settled in a good house, with everything necessary for the use of his family, which consisted of two children—a son and a daughter—with a

wife in the last stage of consumption. His wife died soon after, on which he came to Fort Hunter and resided with me a considerable time, in order to assist me in adding additional translations to the Indian Prayer-Book." Dr. Stuart further intimates that the work accomplished in the way of translation consisted of the Gospel of St. Mark, part of the Acts of the Apostles, a short history of the Bible, with a concise explanation of the Church Catechism. The son referred to in the above letter was Isaac, who died at Burlington Heights, near the city of Hamilton, in the year 1795; the daughter, Christina, married Aaron Hill, a Catechist in the English Church. Christina died at the Mohawk Village, Brantford.

In the winter of 1772-3, Brant applied to Dr. Stuart to marry him to the half-sister of his deceased wife, arguing, after the manner of white widowers wishing to form a like connection, "that the fact of the relationship would secure a greater degree of love and tenderness for the children." The Episcopal clergyman refused on account of the forbidden relationship, when a less scrupulous German ecclesiastical gratified his desire by performing the ceremony.

It was about this time Thayendanagea became the subject of serious religious impressions. He became a thorough-going churchman, entertained a high respect for missionaries and the Word of God, and attended the celebration of the Eucharist regularly. From his serious deportment and the anxiety he manifested for the civilization and christianization of his people, great hopes were entertained by his religious friends of his future usefulness to the church. The camp, however, is not the best university for the development of the Christian graces. Seldom has the military hero thrown aside the sword for the pen or the pulpit. Brant was always a high-minded, generous man, and, as such, set a noble example to his people. Had it not been for the counteracting influence of his war education, no doubt his after life would have exhibited more of the Christian than the military hero.

In the year 1771 commenced the upheaving of those elements which terminated in the revolutionary war between Great Britain and the American Colonies. The Indians being a powerful body, both parties deemed it politic and necessary to negotiate for their services. Brant from his attachment to his late noble patron, Sir W. Johnson, who died in 1774, determined, with his warriors, to adhere to his son-in-law, Col. Guy Johnson, and, when the Colonel fled westward to avoid American capture, Brant, with his principal men, followed. Col. Guy Johnson appointed him his secretary. After discussing the policy they should pursue, Johnson proceeded to the Mohawk with a strong body of Indians. Brant now took a decided stand in favor of the royal cause, and, through all the subsequent campaigns of this deadly strife, evinced his strong and sincere adherence to the British crown. The Six Nations lost their extensive and fertile country, now the garden of the state of New York, through this attachment.

(CONTINUED IN NEXT ISSUE.)