

# GOVERNOR DONGAN OF NEW-YORK AND BRITISH WESTERN TRADE

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THE territory of New-York situated along the "lordly Hudson" was naturally suited for communication with the interior of the continent. This picturesque river that forces its way through the mountains to the Atlantic was an important factor in the development of the west. The Mokawk, its tributary, extended the line of communication westward almost to the great lakes. So the Hudson and its tributary offered a comparatively easy means of access to the distant hunting grounds of Illinois and the fur trade of the northwest. Besides its beautiful scenery, fertile soil, and temperate climate New-York opened the way to a yet more fertile region of almost inexhaustable ressources.

The aborigines who inhabited the territory had the highest social and political development of any Red Indians in North America. They were the famous Iroquois Confederacy of the five nations. The Mohawks, Onondagas, Oneidas, Cayugas and Senecas composed the confederacy and maintained a supremacy over the Algonquins that surrounded them. They were the terror of the Susquehannocks on the south, the Hurons on the north, and the distant Illinois of the west. In 1649 they almost completely destroyed the Hurons ; the remnant of the tribe finding refuge on an island in the Mississippi. Their chief source of strength lay in their united action. If the Europeans had not come to check their increasing power the Iroquois' "sphere of influence" would in time probably have included most of North America.

The Dutch, who were the first Europeans to settle in New-York, were natural traders. Fortune favored the Dutch in giving them this territory that was so well suited to their habits of life. Traffic with the Indians was the primary purpose of the Dutch colony. Most of the American Indians loved to barter, and the haughty Iroquois were no exception. The Dutch soon had a flourishing trade in furs with the natives. Both parties saw that