

of talented and ambitious men, for reasons of policy ; and the safeguards against usurpation were too deeply integrated in their institutions to be overcome or superseded. How this was accomplished was, for a long period, difficult to be understood ; but the intricacy is removed by the single fact, before stated, that the title was hereditary in the tribe, but elective as between certain of the male relatives of the deceased sachem. It will not be necessary to explain minutely how the choice was made, further than to say, that, if the title belonged to the Wolf tribe, the new sachem must be "raised up," to use their own expression, from the same tribe. As the son of the sachem was of another tribe, he was out of the line of succession ; but his brothers were of the Wolf tribe, and so were his sister's sons ; hence we find that the succession fell upon a brother of the deceased ruler, or upon a nephew. Between a brother of the deceased and the son of a sister there was no law establishing a preference ; neither as between several brothers on one side, or several sons of a sister on the other, was there any law of primogeniture. They were all equally eligible, and the law of election came in to decide between them. The choice was made by the wise men and matrons of the tribe ; and among the latter the mother of the deceased ruler exercised a decisive influence.

Upon the decease of a sachem, and the choice of a successor, a council of all the Sachems of the League was convened to "raise up" the new ruler, and invest him with his title. To this council belonged the exclusive power of investing with the office ; and no one could become a sachem in fact, until this ceremony of investiture was performed. These councils lasted several days, and were attended with many forms and ceremonies. They are still held in Western New York as often as each alternate year.

"These sachems were the rulers of the people, partly by elective, and partly by hereditary right ; but their duties and authority were confined exclusively to the affairs of peace. When assembled together, they formed the general council of the league, and possessed, in themselves, the executive, legislative, and judicial powers of the Commonwealth. In the same manner the several sachems of each nation composed the national council, which exercised a separate government over all the affairs of their respective nations, such as did not relate to the general welfare.

"Many years after the formation of the league, a new office was created—the office or title of *chief*. It was of lower rank than that of sachem, and was not hereditary. It was in the strict sense elective, and the reward of merit, and ceased with the life of the individual. To this class the most distinguished of the war captains and orators of the Iroquois belonged ; among them, Tā-yen-dā-nae-ga, or Joseph Brant, and Sa-go-ye-wat-ba, or Red Jacket. At the present time the Seneca nation, in Western New York, have eight sachems, as of old, who hold their titles by the original tenure, and about seventy chiefs, who hold by election.

"It is an interesting fact, that the sachems of the Iroquois at the present day, although the league is dismembered, and the nations are scattered, still bear the same individual names which were borne by their predecessors at the establishment of the league. Thus Ho-no-we-na-to, which means "Keeper of the Wam-