

and would naturally make an epoch in their chronology." But it is doubtful whether the Five Nations knew anything definite about the Cartier expedition which had visited the territories only of their mortal enemies, for such knowledge could have come to them only by the vague hearsay of captives, and it is not probable that such precarious information "would naturally make an epoch in their chronology."

The inference from the presumptive evidence in our possession is that the "white people" mentioned by Pyrlaeus and either by him or by Heckewelder identified with the Dutch, were only a part of the "white people" who were first met during the year 1609.

Again, on page 180 of the volume cited, Mr. Hale says: "If when the Dutch first came among the Iroquois the confederacy had existed for only about eighty years, there must have been many persons then living who had personally known some of its founders." But we have no proof that there were *not* "many" such persons "then living," for the early Dutch were far more solicitous about profits of barter than for ethnologic data, and so it is not in the least strange that they have left us scarcely any trustworthy evidence regarding the institutions of the people with whom they traded.

"It is," he further says, "quite inconceivable that the cloud of mythological legends which has gathered around the names of these founders . . . should have arisen in so short a term as that suggested by Pyrlaeus." But, in the first place, it is overlooked that the founders of the league were all men reputed to be skilled in the arts of sorcery and the supernatural, and, secondly, that their language of statecraft dealt very largely in metaphor, allegory, and in striking symbolism, and, lastly, that common tradition, unhampered by written records, would, in attempting to eulogize the achievements of their heroes, in a short time transform such material into confused mythologic legends by confounding the acts and sayings of their heroes with those attributed to their gods.

Mr. Hale believes it improbable that in the brief period which has elapsed since the date suggested by the tradition recorded by Pyrlaeus "a fourth part of the names of the fifty [original, forty-eight] chiefs" forming the first council would have become "unintelligible or at least doubtful in meaning."