

passed through New York City on their way to Washington, where they intended to negotiate with the Government concerning former treaties relative to their lands. They had brought with them their old wampum-belts, as documents to prove the justness of their claims. One of these belts, if I am not mistaken, had been given them by General Washington on some important occasion; for even the whites of that period were under the necessity of conforming to the established rule in their transactions with the natives. The New York Historical Society honored these delegates with a public reception, which ceremony took place in the large hall of the Society. The president delivered the speech of welcome, which an old chief, unable to express himself in English, answered in the Seneca dialect. A younger chief, Dr. Peter Wilson, called by the people of his tribe *De-jih-non-da-weh-hoh*, or the "Pacifiator," served as interpreter, being well versed in both languages. He afterward exhibited the belts, and explained their significance. They were, as far as I can recollect, about two feet long and of a hand's breadth. The ground consisted of white beads, while blue ones formed the figures or marks. The latter resembled ornamental designs, and I could not discover in them the form of any known object. I compared them at the time to somewhat roughly executed embroideries of simple patterns. I asked the "Pacifiator" whether these belts were the work of Indians or of whites; but he was unable to give me any definite information on that point.*

I possess a number of white and blue wampum-beads from an Indian grave, opened in 1861, near Charlestown, in the State of Rhode Island. The late Dr. Usher Parsons, of Providence, Rhode Island, to whom I am indebted for these beads, has described the grave,† and thinks it enclosed the remains of a daughter of Ninigret, Sachem of the Niantic or Nahantic tribe of Indians. The interment is supposed to have taken place about the year 1660. These beads are regularly worked cylinders, drilled lengthwise, and from five to nine millimetres in length, by four or five in diameter. Of course, it cannot now be decided whether Indians or whites were their manufacturers. The grave contained many other objects, but almost without exception derived from the colonists of that period. I may also state, in this place, that thus far I have not found in the oldest English works on North America a perfectly satisfactory account of the method originally employed by the Indians in the manufacture, and especially in the drilling, of the wampum-beads.‡

Among the tribes of the northwestern coast of North America, from

* This is the same chief who delivered, in 1847, before the New York Historical Society, a powerful speech, quoted by Morgan, (*League of the Iroquois*, p. 440). The chief's name was then *Wā-o-wō-wā-nō-onk*.

† *New York Historical Magazine*, February, 1863.

‡ "Before ever they had awle blades from Europe, they made shift to bore this their shell money, with stones, and to fell their trees with stone set in a wooden staff, and used wooden hoes; which some old and poore women (fearfull to leave the old tradition) use to this day."—*Roger Williams, Key*, p. 130.