

State ; and the Senecas, the most numerous of them all, built their villages in the Genesee country. It was thus grouped that authentic history first found the Five Nations, as they were termed, when Samuel Champlain penetrated into their country with the war-parties of the Algonquins and the Hurons. At a later period, when the Tuscaroras, a kindred southern tribe, entered the confederacy, and found a new home near the Oneidas, the Iroquois became the Six Nation Indians, a name they have continued to bear from that day to this. Each tribe had a separate organisation of its own, and was subdivided into totemic clans which had a distinguishing "totem" or mark, representing some bird, or beast, or reptile. In its sachem it had a hereditary adviser, whose assistants were the inferior chiefs, and principal men of the tribe. But when foreign powers had to be treated with, or grave questions of general policy determined, an assembly of delegates convened at the great central council house in the Onondaga Valley. There ambassadors were received, alliances entered into, and business transacted for the whole confederacy. Time-honoured usage governed the rules of procedure in this Indian Parliament, and during the fiercest debates it maintained its dignity and self-control. Intellectually the Iroquois stood at the head of all the red men of North America ; while in courage, endurance and firmness of purpose, they had no superior. There is no evidence that Cartier ever met with any of the confederates, who, in his time, do not appear to have penetrated as far as the St. Lawrence ; and the Algonquins and Hurons were still in secure possession of their ancient hunting grounds. But when Champlain came to Canada, some sixty years after Cartier's death, he found the Iroquois engaged in active hostilities with the northern tribes, to whom he rendered important aid in repelling the invaders, an occurrence that the latter never forgot nor forgave. During the seventeenth century the Iroquois ascended to the zenith of their power, and dominated, either by force or policy, over all the surrounding tribes. Their war-parties roamed over half of North America, from the Great Lakes to the Mississippi ; from the tide waters of the Atlantic to the head-streams of the Illinois, and left death and desolation behind them wherever they turned their steps. Amid the hills of New England the war-cry of the Mohawks filled its Indians with dismay, until at last they abandoned altogether the shores of Lake Champlain,