

The exaggeration as to the numbers of the Iroquoian warriors recorded by Lescarbot was evidently put forth by the vanquished peoples, who consoled their vanity by assigning the cause of their defeat to the overwhelming numbers of their enemies rather than to a lack of courage on their part.

The foregoing citations, denoting a serious state of war, it seems to me, are indicative of a newly formed league, and make it probable that its formation was subsequent to the middle of the sixteenth century (1550). This inference is supported by tradition, and, small as is the value of tradition as a basis of scientific research, it is by no means to be despised as an adjunct. The Rev. C. Pyrlaeus, who was formerly (about 1744-1750) a missionary among the Mohawks, who lived long with the Iroquois, and who was well acquainted with their language, is quoted by Heckewelder, in his "Account of the History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations," as follows: "The Rev. C. Pyrlaeus, in his manuscript book, page 234, says: 'The alliance or confederacy of the Five Nations was established, as near as can be conjectured, one age (or the length of a man's life) before the white people (the Dutch) came into the country. Thannawage was the name of the aged Indian, a Mohawk, who first proposed such an alliance.'" It is not an easy matter to assign a definite number of years to the expression "one age" in the foregoing citation, but, taking all things into consideration, I think that 60 years will be within ten years, one way or the other, of the historical value of the mooted expression, and we may assume, I think, 1609, in which year both French and Dutch were met by the Iroquois, as the probable date when the "white people came into the country," and by this reckoning we obtain 1559 as the most probable date of the formation of the league, which is deducible from the precarious factors now at hand.

Commenting on the identification with the Dutch of the "white people" mentioned in the citation from Pyrlaeus, Mr. Hale (Book of Rites, page 179), says that this "is probably wrong. The white people who first 'came into the country' of the Huron-Iroquois nations were the French under Cartier.

The presence of this expedition, with its soldiers and sailors of strange complexion and armed with terrible weapons, must have been known to all the tribes dwelling along the river,