

was in danger of forfeiting his life on the spot for his rashness, and had much to do to elude his pursuers, if he was fortunate enough to escape their deadly weapons in the first hostile encounter. Things went on in this manner until the several states were obliged to declare open hostilities against each other in order to protect their rights the better. From this time they were engaged in constant warfare, more particularly against their immediate neighbours. The Indians say, this warlike attitude among the various tribes in the old times was occasioned rather by the force of circumstances than by the mere love of slaughter or warlike enterprise; that it was not altogether a war of extermination or conquest, and it would appear from their statements that the practice of carrying on cruel exterminating wars was adopted after the discovery of America by the Europeans. In fact, it was introduced by them, and great care was taken in their treaties with the Indians to induce them to adopt this sanguinary policy as a punishment to be inflicted upon any offending tribe. The Omahmee Indians in the vicinity of Omahmee River, on the coast of Lake Erie, were subjected to this severity, because they had ill-treated some traders, and at the instigation of the French they were attacked by several tribes. Although single handed the poor brave fellows held out for three months; yet, being then reduced to great straits by famine and by overwhelming numbers, the few survivors of that once powerful tribe came out and begged the besiegers not to devour the whole of the Omahmee nation. It is said, that out of the whole tribe only five families escaped this indiscriminate slaughter. The warfare then in which the Indian tribes were constantly engaged previous to the discovery of America in the fifteenth century, was begun and carried on for the sake of self-preservation. For such a state of things was considered necessary, inasmuch as a universal peace would have given too much liberty to the hunters, who would have overrun the country and in a short time killed off the animals, upon which the whole population depended for their chief subsistence and clothing. But the keeping up of hostilities by the various tribes against one another had the desired effect of preventing trespass upon their rights respectively, and causing their respective members to avoid as much as possible the frontiers for fear of meeting an enemy. The borders being thus left unmolested by the restless hunter, they were looked upon as neutral grounds, where the animals might resort and breed freely, whence the neighbouring districts might be supplied with game in abundance for the use of the inhabitants.

These are the reasons assigned by tradition for the continual wars