

A MEMORIAL CONCERNING THE IROQUOIS, &c.

My Lord,

The Iroquois, or Five Confederate Nations of Indians distinguished and known by that name, are settled on the frontier of the Province of New-York. From the first reduction of this Province by the British arms, they entered into a strict alliance with the English, which they have always inviolably observed. History perhaps cannot furnish an instance where a treaty of this kind has been more faithfully adhered to. It subsisted upwards of an hundred years without any material breach on their part, if we will only except such as were drawn over to the French by Popish Missionaries, and who, on embracing their Religion, adopted their Civil Interests also.

Those Nations, ever since their union in a League of Confederacy, were greatly superiour in courage and military skill to the other Savages of North America. From that period, which commenced before we had any knowledge of this Province, they have been the terror of all the neighboring Tribes, most of which they have subdued; some they have entirely extirpated. The spirit of conquest carried them far beyond the limits of their own native districts. They have extended their empire over a tract of country 1200 miles in length, from north to south, and 600 in breadth, from east to west.

Their alliance with the English, naturally led them to take part with us when at war with France. The French have often severely felt the power of their Arms. The Iroquois have more than once defeated the united forces of the French, and their confederate Indians; and have carried fire and sword into the very heart of their settlements, threatening them with utter ruin. They formed a barrier along our frontiers against the French and the Savages in their interest; and by this protection, and the lucrative trade we carried on with them, they greatly contributed to raise this Province to its present flourishing state.

The Five Confederate Nations are the Mohawks, the Oneidas, the Onondagas, the Cayugas and the Senekas. To these may be added the Tuscaroras, who moved some years ago from the south, were taken into the confederacy, and incorporated with the Five Nations.

The continual wars in which the Iroquois have been engaged, have considerably reduced their number from what it was formerly. This is particularly the case of the Mohawks. They, by their wisdom in Council and bravery in the Field, had gained an ascendancy over the other Tribes which they preserve to this day. In all deliberations which relate to the common interest of the confederacy, and in the execution of every enterprise, the Mohawks generally take the lead. Being situated the most easterly, and consequently the nearest to our first Settlements, of any of the Five Nations; the Missionaries sent by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, to convert the Indians of this Province, resided among them. The labors of those Missionaries were attended with such success, that in time the whole Nation was brought over to Christianity. This attached the Mohawks more firmly to us. They always stood forth our faithful allies; especially in the late war, though in the course of it, the greater part of their bravest Warriors perished. Our victories were often purchased at the expense of their blood; for they were among the first in almost every danger.