

by that of the relative ignorance of the various tribes at the time they were treated with, and the urgency of their then present wants. Looked at from this point of view, the transaction loses altogether the aspect of an equitable purchase. It must be evident that the Government, in such arrangements, does *not* fully acknowledge the Indian title, the "territorial estate and eminent dominion" being vested in the crown, and the claim of the Indians restricted practically—though not patently in the transactions as effected with the Indians—to right of compensation for the occupancy of their hunting grounds.

It is very difficult to arrive at any certain conclusion regarding the original number of the Indian population of this part of the Continent. The New England tribes are, as we have seen, said by some authorities to have each possessed several thousand warriors. The Iroquois were estimated by La Hontan at 70,000, and the Hurons, at an earlier date, at from 30 to 40,000. Garneau, on the contrary, gives, as the result of careful calculation, numbers very much smaller, and supports them by remarks on the exaggerated estimates of the notions formed by some travellers. He allows, for instance, to the whole Algonquin race 90,000 only, and to the Hurons and Iroquois together 17,000. Though the first estimates may be too great, these almost certainly err on the other side.

In the four eastern provinces of the Dominion, Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, there are at the present day about 30,000 Indians, the remnant of the former numerous population. A considerable number of Indians in Quebec, and north of the settled districts, in the northern and north-western part of Ontario, still remain in a condition little, if at all, superior to that of their ante-Columbian ancestors. Their lands, unsuited for agriculture, are not coveted by the whites. They have only the advantage of a certain immunity from pillage and war, and of being able to procure from the Hudson Bay Company and other traders such articles of European manufacture as they may be able to afford. After describing the condition of these wild western tribes, Dr. Wilson, in the last edition of his "Prehistoric Man," writes of them: "It is not a little strange to find such pagan rites perpetuated among nomads still wandering around the outskirts of settlements occupied by descendants of colonists, who, upwards of three centuries ago, transplanted to the shores of the St. Lawrence the arts and