

form is not only characteristic of the Huron-Iroquois stock; but it is prevalent in others of the northern tribes. Recognizing a correspondence, in this and other respects, between the Algonkins and Iroquois, who long divided between them the area of Upper and Lower Canada and the adjacent western territory, Dr. Latham remarks: "The Iroquois and Algonkins exhibit in the most typical form the characteristics of the North American Indians as exhibited in the earliest descriptions, and are the two families upon which the current notions respecting the physiognomy, habits, and moral and intellectual powers of the so-called Red Race are chiefly founded." Of the former, Mr. Parkman, who has studied their later history with the minutest care, says: "In this remarkable family of tribes occur the fullest developments of Indian character, and the most conspicuous examples of Indian intelligence. If the higher traits popularly ascribed to the race are not to be found here, they are to be found nowhere."¹

The Iroquois were an important branch of the great stock which included also the Hurons, or Wyandots, the native historical race of Canada. But divided as the two were throughout the whole period of French Canadian history by the bitterest antagonism, it is convenient to speak of them under the compound term of Huron-Iroquois; and to the special history of this indigenous stock, with the more general suggestions prompted by their peculiar characteristics as a typical race of American aborigines, attention is here chiefly directed. In doing so it is desirable not only to note the physical geography of the country which they occupied, as a region of forest and lakes; but, still more, to keep in view this fact as a predominant characteristic of the continent, and as one important factor in the evolution of whatever may seem to be peculiar in the aborigines of North America.

The effects resulting from the physical features of a country, on the development and aggregation, or interblending, of its races can nowhere be wisely overlooked. Even within the narrow limits of the British Islands the influences of mountain and lowlands, of the fertile stretches of Kent and the valley of the Thames, the fens of Lincolnshire, the moorlands of Northumbria, and the Welsh and Scottish Highlands, have largely contributed to the endurance, if not in some degree to the development, of ethnical distinctions; as they have undoubtedly been the chief source, not only of the perpetuation, but of the multiplication of diversities in language.

In this respect Britain is an epitome of Europe, with its great mountain ranges, and detached peninsulas, by means of which races have been isolated within well-defined areas, and their languages and other distinctive peculiarities preserved. Russia alone, of all European countries, presents analogies to Central Asia as a region favourable to nomadic life; and in so far as its history differs from that of the continent at large, it accords with such physical conditions. Throughout the whole historic period, as doubtless in prehistoric times, the great chain of mountains reaching from the western spur of the Pyrenees to the Balkans has influenced European progress; while the chief navigable river, the Danube, traversing the continent through one uniform temperate zone, has tended still further to the perpetuation of certain distinctive ethnical characteristics in central and southern Europe. In all its most important geographical features, the

¹ The Jesuits in North America, p. 43.