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THE IROQUOIS OF THE GRAND RIVER

[The following, by MISS E. PAULINE JOHNSON, is from *Harper's Weekly*.]

WITHIN the last decade public interest in the North American Indians has undergone a revival, whether induced by the fact that the red man is making a final and powerful effort to obtain a hearing of his wrongs, and emphasizing this endeavor by frequent bloodshed in the far West, or whether by the renewed and assiduous application of ethnologists and archæologists to Indian subject, it is difficult to decide.

With the exception of Finland, the country is unknown that possesses such wealth of folklore as America. There are mines of unchronicled legends and superstitions, each colored by tribal distinctions, that scholars will never unearth, and that will perish with the people whose blood grows annually thinner and paler as their prairies receive the "white man's footprint," as their rivers ripple to the dip of his oars, as their forests fall at the hurling of his

axe, and who will themselves be but a tradition and a memory in the lapse of a century or so.

Probably the most famous and well known Indian nation, both on the pages of history and in the press of to-day, is the Iroquois, that magnificent people whose name was synonymous with war, blood, and bravery throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and whose descendants still possess much of the fire and all of the exclusive birthrights of tradition so jealously treasured by their ancestors.

The six distinct tribes that compose the Iroquois nation, being the Mohawk, Cayuga, Onondaga, Seneca, Oneida, and Tuscarora, have since the American War of Independence been permanently settled in southwestern Ontario. Fragmentary remnants of the different tribes and bands are scattered throughout New York State and portions of the various reserves in Canada, but the original and collective stock have for upwards of a hundred years made their homes on the shores of the Grand River, one of the loveliest and most legend-thronged streams in the province.

When under the generalship of Captain

Joseph Brant, these people allied their forces with the British, and left in the Mohawk Valley a precarious livelihood that had been riddled and checkered by the numerous wars of the colonists, the imperial government allotted them a reserve grant which comprised the land lying within six miles on either side of the Grand River, from its source to its mouth.

At that period, these were hunting and fishing grounds unequalled in the country; but a century of insidious inroads made by white settlers, of a civilization not always wisely conducted, has despoiled the Iroquois of his game his national glory and hardihood, and the greater portion of his real estate, inasmuch as the reserve has dwindled and shrunken into a comparative dot of land that embraces but 53,000 acres of the least value along the entire course of the river. In early times much of this land slipped out of the Indians' possession in an unrecorded manner; but after a season, when incoming whites were settling the country, the demand for river lands in southern Upper Canada grew urgent, and the Iroquois were induced to surrender their reserve bit



A PROSPEROUS IROQUOIS.