

largest population. Their historical celebrity began with the earliest explorations of the Hudson River, and their present advanced position also invests them with peculiar interest. In 1868 their numbers were 2796, and they annually increase. They consist of portions of the kindred nations of the Mohawks, Senecas, Cayugas, Onondagas and Oneidas, who once inhabited the valleys on the rivers and lakes of Central New York, including the Mohawk and Genesee; and were so powerful a confederacy that they not only overran the region afterward known as Upper Canada, but carried their wars far and wide into the Western prairies. Their young men tested their bravery and endurance by expeditions against tribes occupying remote Southern regions, and particularly against the Cherokees, whom they esteemed as foemen especially worthy of their best efforts.

To the five nations already enumerated have been added the Tuscaroras, who, although at an early period they migrated from North Carolina, are shown by tradition and language to be of the same original stock, and, when driven from their Southern hunting grounds, were admitted into the Confederacy, which from that time ceased to be "The Five," and was called "The Six Nations."

These Indians residing on the Grand River, are the representatives and descendants of those aborigines of whom De Witt Clinton said they were peculiarly distinguished by "great attainments in polity, in negotiation, in eloquence, and in war." They form the organization which eighty years before the American revolution held up their union as a political model to the English colonies.

I deemed the present condition of these Indians worthy of close investigation. Every facility for obtaining information regarding them was cheerfully afforded by their courteous "visiting superintendent, Mr. J. P. Gilkeson; and, in company with him, I visited their principal school, and was present at one of their councils.

About a mile from the town of Brantford we reached the Indian school-house, established by the New England Society. It is a plain, substantial three-story building of brick, pleasantly situated on a farm comprising two hundred acres of fertile land. At the time of my visit the number of children in attendance, including both sexes, was eighty-two. They are taught, fed and clothed at the expense of the society. None are admitted before the age of ten. The writing of several was very good, and their examinations in spelling were highly creditable. There is no attempt to confer more than a plain English education, but provision is made for consecutive advancements to higher schools if the proficiency attained seems to justify them. The farmer of the establishment carefully instructs the boys in the work of the farm at all seasons of the year, taking a limited number with him into the fields and barns on all suitable occasions, and adopting specific work to each of them, subject to his inspection.

I regretted that horticultural instructions were not added to those of the resident farmer. At an expense almost nominal, a few ornamental trees, shrubs, and plants would increase the attractions of the temporary home and its lessons to the young Indians; and by adding a nursery garden, the children would also be instructed in the art of sowing, rearing, budding, and grafting the fruit trees adapted to the climate. Much present and agreeable interest would be excited, useful employment would be afforded, and permanent and practical ideas of a beneficial kind would thus be carried to many Indian homes, and secure material and profitable results, while the productions of the garden and nursery would nearly or quite defray the expense of the undertaking.

In addition to the common branches of education, the girls are instructed in the ordinary household work of the farm, including spinning and sewing by hand and on the machine.

It was found impossible to secure attendance sufficiently regular without boarding the children in the establishment. The parents of many reside at considerable distances from it. It is unquestionable that the influence exerted by the school has had a very beneficial influence on the farms and homes of these Indians.

In this school two or three of the children were undistinguishable from whites, and many were evidently of mixed blood. I inquired from their teacher, who was a man of experience in other schools, whether, in receiving instruction, there was any applicable difference between the children of the two races. He thought that, of the two, the Indians were the quickest.

Here no attempt is now made to teach the mechanical arts, although at one time this was done. The project was not abandoned because the Indian youths manifested an insufficient aptitude for such requirements. They preferred the independent life of farmers to that of confined and systematic mechanics.

The same remarkable "New England Society," already far advanced in the third century of its benevolent and useful labours, maintains eight schools among the Indians of the Six Nations, besides two more schools in other parts of Ontario. It is a close corporation, and, in some respects, little is known of it. By an

ordinance issued in 1649, during the time of the British Commonwealth, it was constituted a corporation under the name of "The President and Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England." Under the same authority "general collections were made in all the counties, cities, towns and parishes in England and Wales," and lands were purchased with the money so collected. On the restoration, the objects of the company were declared to be not confined to New England, but to extend also to "the parts adjacent in America."

The charter states the purpose of the society to be "for the further propagation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ amongst the heathen natives in or near New England, and the parts adjacent in America, and for the better civilizing, educating, and instructing of the said heathen natives in learning and the knowledge of the true and only God, and in the Protestant religion already owned and publicly professed by many of them, and for the better encouragement of such others as shall embrace the same, and of their posterities after them, to abide and continue in and hold fast the said profession.

Not far from the chief school established by this company, rises the spire of a neat and quaint little church, the oldest sacred edifice in the province of Ontario. It was built by Captain Brant and his brother Indians, who brought with them from the Mohawk valley, a large Bible and a silver set of communion plate, presented to them by "the good Queen Anne," and yet cherished as inalienable mementoes by the nation. The bell which called them to Christian worship in the wilderness of the Mohawk is yet retained for similar purposes on the Grand River.

The council-house of the Six Nations is a new and commodious building, about twelve miles from Brantford. In the proceedings held within it many of the old observances are yet retained. The chieftancies, at the times of peace, have been hereditary through the female line, but inherited not by the son of the chief, but the son or nominee of his daughter. The ancient office of fire-keeper is also continued. "The act and the symbol of the act were both in his hands. He summoned the chiefs and actually lit the sacred fire at whose blaze their pipes were lighted."

I found about sixty of the chiefs present. Three or four of the number could not be distinguished from whites; but on the whole the Indian characteristics prevailed, and indicated less intermixture of races than might have been expected, after they had lived in proximity so long. In dress, cleanliness, intelligence, and other marks of condition and character, the assemblage was at least equal to that of an ordinary town meeting in a good agricultural region. Two old chiefs wore gaily coloured handkerchiefs as turbans, and had loose coats with sashes, but there were no other approaches to Indian costume.

On all occasions of adequate importance, Mr. Gilkeson, as the visiting superintendent, presides.

Before open discussion began, the chiefs "put their heads together" in small knots or parties throughout the room and consulted carefully. The subsequent speakers in public understood to express the opinions thus formed in the minor circles. The proceedings were in the language of the Six Nations, but an able interpreter officiated when necessary.

The ancient and admirable characteristics of Indians in council yet prevail. Even when highly educated, our own race seldom attains the absolutely unembarrassed fluency of language, the self-possessed and easy intonations and gestures, and the quiet and dignified courtesy which distinguished the speakers. They spoke with the elevated air of men who respect themselves and their hearers. To understand the full significance of such a scene, one must be an actual witness of it.

Having been informed of my object in visiting them, they appointed one of their number to address me. He did so through an interpreter, with equal ease, tact, and courtesy, and expressed the most friendly feelings, and a readiness to afford whatever information I might desire. When I had said a few words in reply he commended me and my countrymen to the care of the Great Spirit, and gave me to understand that he was deputed on behalf of the assembled chiefs to shake hands with me. He did so, gracefully and cordially, apparently unconscious that the precedent might sometimes be advantageously adopted by assemblages more numerous and important.

After the formal meeting was over, a few Indians addressed me through one of their own number and an interpreter, informing me that they were pagans, and yet adhered to their ancient institutions; holding the same opinions and practising the same observances regarding religion and the Great Spirit as had been handed down to them through their forefathers from time immemorial or prehistoric. Like the other members of these nations, they knew of the President or Great Father, and expressed pleasure in having seen a citizen of the United States. They assured me that