

IROQUOIS

Little is known positively of their origin, as is pointed out by Dr. Boyle in the Ontario Archaeological Report of 1905. Their later history is inseparably linked with that of the English in America. They belong to the Huron-Iroquois stock, which composed the Five Nations—the Mohawks, Onondagas, Senecas, Oneidas and Cayugas, to which were afterwards joined the Tuscaroras, and an alliance existed with their kindred, the Hurons or Wyandots, the Neutrals, the Eries and others. The present evidence is that the Huron clans were the older members of the group. They were surrounded by the Algonquins and for a time were in subjection to and finally driven out of the country about the St. Lawrence by the Alligewi, or Adirondacks. This tribe they afterwards exterminated and spared neither their own kindred, the Hurons, the Neutrals nor the Eries. They stood first intellectually and in war. "Mr. Hale has in his work shown the great political and administrative capacity of the Iroquois, their general council with its recognition of the conservative aristocratic and the elective democratic elements, the balancing of federal privileges and local rights, the adoption of descent in the female line, and their high respect for women, the peace-makers for the people, were enough to win for this gifted people the admiration of every investigator. But more than this, some four hundred and sixty years ago an Onondaga chief, Hiawatha, now rescued from the realm of myth and legend, a wise and prudent statesman, formed a plan for a federal union with tribal autonomy of his nation with the other four tribes, the object of this successful league was to abolish war and institute peace for ever. It lasted more than two centuries to crumble away at the coming of the whites."

Another side of the Iroquois was their fierce wars with the French, their cruel torture of the Jesuit missionaries, and their extermination of the Hurons, all of which have been described by the masterly hand of Parkman. Whenever there was occasion they fought by the side of the British. Now they are highly civilized, having villages, a large council house and a regiment and are undoubtedly the most advanced of all the Indians. Their settlements are at Caughnawaga, St. Regis, Oka, Thyendinaga, on