

Canada Temperance Advocate.

Devoted to Temperance, Agriculture, and Education.

No. 9.

MONTREAL, JANUARY, 1842.

VOL. VII.

DISCOVERY OF THE IROQUOIS INDIANS.

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It is a striking coincidence that the Iroquois Indians were first unhappily made acquainted with their two greatest enemies, Rum and Gunpowder, by the rival discoverers, Hudson and Champlain, during the same week of the same year, 1609. While Henry Hudson was cautiously feeling his way, as he supposed, into the Northern ocean, through the channel of the river which bears his name, Champlain was accompanying a war party of the Hurons against the Iroquois, upon the lake receiving its name from him. Hudson discovered a company of the Iroquois upon the bank of the river, whom he regaled with rum. Champlain discovered a body of Iroquois warriors upon the coast of the lake, near the spot afterwards selected for the site of Ticonderoga, and there first taught them the fatal power of gunpowder. The tradition of the savages, as to their first knowledge of the former, is substantially this: Many years ago, before a white skin had ever been seen, some of their people who were fishing where the sea widens, descried a huge object, with white wings, moving up the water. They hurried ashore and called their friends, to view the phenomenon. None of them could divine what it was. Some of them supposed it must be a huge fish, and others a monster of another sort. Onward it came, growing larger as it approached. The natives were terrified, and despatched runners in all directions to collect their warriors. By and by living objects were seen moving upon the back of the monster. As it came nearer they saw that it was a floating house or castle, and that the living objects on board had the figures of men, but clothed in a very different manner from themselves. One of them was in red. They now concluded that it was the manitto, or Great Spirit, coming to make them a visit. Their sensations were, therefore, changed from fear to adoration. Instantly they set themselves at the work of preparation to receive their celestial visiter with divine honors. The men prepared a sacrifice, and the women a feast. They had no apprehension that the manitto was coming to them in anger, for they worshiped him in sincerity. They descried from the distance various animals in their manitto's water pavilion, and thought that, perhaps he was coming to bring them some new species of game. While preparations for the festival were in progress, the house upon the water stopped. The medicine-men were busy with their charms, to divine the import of the extraordinary visitation, and the women and children looked on with awe. At length a voice sounded from the vessel, speaking words in a language they could not understand. They replied by a shout peculiarly their own. A small canoe then left the large vessel with several persons therein, one of them was the being in red. It was certainly the manitto! The sachems and warriors formed a circle to receive him with solemn respect. As the canoe touched the land, the figure in red, with two attendants, stepped on shore, and approached them with a friendly countenance. The figure in red saluted them with a smile, and they returned his salute. A passage was opened for him into the circle, and his gorgeous red

dress, and ornaments glittering in the bright sun, were viewed with delight. Surely it must be the manitto. But why should he have a white skin? The thought was perplexing; but he was, nevertheless, regarded with mingled feelings of amazement and adoration. After friendly salutations had been interchanged, the manitto beckoned to one of his attendants at the canoe, who brought him a bockhack,* clear as the new ice upon the surface of a lake. He also had a little cup, which was also transparent. The manitto then poured a liquid from the bockhack into the cup, which he drank. Then filling the cup again, he handed it to the chief standing near him. The chief smelled it, and passed it to the next, who did the same, and in this manner it went round the circle, without the liquid having been tasted by either. As the last man of the circle was about returning the cup to the manitto, the first chief interposed and arrested the movement. The cup, he said, had been given them to drink, as the giver had done himself, and it would be offending their Great Benefactor to return it to him untasted. To drink it would please him,—to refuse might provoke his wrath. Be the consequences, therefore, what they might, he would drink the cup. It would be better for him to encounter even a poisoned draught, than for the Great Spirit to become angry with their whole nation. Saying which, the patriotic chief bade his people adieu, and quaffed the cup to its bottom. All eyes were now directed to the chief in watching the effects. There was no sudden change; but no long time had elapsed before his joints became relaxed,—his movements grew flexible, and ere long his limbs refused to perform their office. His eyes closed lustreless, and he rolled heavy and helpless upon the ground. The dusky group stood around him in solemn thought, and the wailings of the women rose upon the gale. He became motionless, and they supposed him dead. But perceiving afterward, from the heaving of his chest, that he yet breathed, their grief was abated, and they watched anxiously the result—not daring, of course, to breathe a murmur against the Great Spirit, whatever that result might be. After a long time their chief began to revive. He rose upon his seat, rubbed his eyes, and at length sprang joyously upon his feet. He declared that he had experienced the most delightful sensations while in the trance. He had seen visions, and had never been more happy. He requested another draught; and, encouraged by his example, the liquor was poured out for them all. They all partook of the ravishing cup,—and all became intoxicated.

Fatal indeed was that cup! From the hour they first tasted the maddening poison to the present, their thirst for it has not abated. In vain have their best advisers and teachers admonished them against it. In vain have humane legislatures endeavored to prohibit its introduction among them. In vain have their own councils, when sober, passed decrees against it. And equally vain have been the most eloquent and pathetic appeals of their women against it;—whenever and wherever they can lay their hands upon the fire-water they are sure to drink it. Two hundred years ago this

* A gourd. The reference is to a glass decanter.