

But they were not long unmolested. The warlike tribe of the Mohawks claimed the exclusive right of hunting here; and whenever the hunting parties of either nation met, fierce conflicts would ensue.

Not many moons had passed since the arrival of the Ojibeways, when Onessah, their Sachem, called together a council of the war chiefs of his nation.

It was at the season when the maple trees are red, and blushing like the rose; and so the verdant leaves were fading, and wearing in their decadence a hundred varied hues. The deer came bounding through the forest glades towards the lakes, and the wild fowl flocked in thousands in the marshes.

Without a word the warriors took their seats. Then Onessah began his speech.

"My children—six moons have passed since we planted our lodges near the hunting grounds of the Mohawks. We wanted to hunt with them in amity. They would not. We wanted peace—they wanted war.

"They have said they will drive us back to the rising of the sun. My children, shall we go? They have said the warriors of the Ojibeways will not meet their warriors face to face.—That their hearts are craven, and their arms the arms of women! My children, is this true? They have lain in ambush for our hunting parties; like the wild cat of the forest, springing on their unsuspecting prey. They have taken our warriors unawares, and their women have seared them to the heart with burning brands; and they have said that our warriors wept like women. My children, this is not true—the Mohawks have lied.

"They have lied. The spirits of departed warriors—the voice of the Great Spirit—alike, call on us for vengeance. My children, shall we obey the call?"

With one voice the chieftains answered "Yes!"

They issued from the council, their eyes inflamed with passion, headed by the great warrior.

Each brandished in the air a heavy war club. A ring was formed—a painted post, the representative of the foe, was planted in the centre—then, with yells of fearful import, the war-dance began.

That night a spy of the Mohawks was taken near the encampment—they cut off his scalping tuft, and then his ears, and having slit his nose, sent him to his tribe—the bloody herald of a bloody war.

Ere he parted, Onessah gave him a message of fierce defiance to his tribe. "Go, tell your warriors," he said, "that on yonder Island, from whence neither can escape, having sent adrift our canoes, we will meet you in battle, and make your warriors eat their lying words."