

cruelties, they were also able in organizing power, strong in a sort of barbaric intellectual strength, constant alike in friendship and hatred, energetic beyond all comparison. Traditions which have a force almost equal to historic fact record the birth of their power in the fifteenth century under the leadership, and by the statecraft, of a chief named Hiawatha.

He it was, who—according to the translation of Indian wampum records by the late Dr. Horatio Hale—conceived the plan of a vast native confederation which should turn the mind of the Indian from fighting to the paths of peace and contentment. He it was, who devised the famous Iroquois system of separate nations controlling their own local affairs but lodging general interests in the hands of a common Council of all the nations, capable of indefinite expansion in the number of tribes included and a weapon, therefore, of enormous power in the hands of an able man. Into the proposed League Hiawatha eventually drew the Mohawks, the Oneidas, the Cayugas, the Senecas and the Onondagas. Writing toward the end of the eighteenth century, and amid influences of surrounding hatred and hostility which made any kind of fair play to the Indian difficult, the Hon. Cadwallader Colden—a well known New York historian—says of the Iroquois organization and polity as it appeared in his day, that:

“Each of these nations is an absolute republic in itself. The authority of the rulers is gained by, and consists wholly in the opinion the rest of the nation have of their wisdom and integrity. Honour and esteem are their principal rewards as shame and being despised are their punishments. Their great men, both sachems and captains, are generally poorer than the common people for they affect to give away and distribute all the presents and plunder they get in their treaties or in war. There is not a man in the Ministry (Council) of the Five Nations who has gained his office otherwise than by merit, and there is not the least salary, or any sort of profit annexed to any office to tempt the covetous or sordid.”

The bitter enemies, and eventual victims, of the Iroquois were the Huron tribes of the regions bordering on Georgian Bay and in