



Decorating the Brant Monument, Brantford, November 23rd.

Photograph by Park & Co.

Honouring a Great Chief

THE twenty-fourth of last month was the one hundredth anniversary of the death of Captain Joseph Brant (Thayendanegea) and the centenary was appropriately observed in the prosperous Ontario city which is named in honour of the great warrior. At Brantford that Sunday hundreds of Indians and white citizens visited the grave of Brant and after the usual services in the Mohawk church a wreath was placed on the stone slab covering the tomb. During the morning service, Rev. Dr. Ashton gave an interesting account of the life of Brant. The collection was taken up in a piece of silver plate sent to the Mohawks by Queen Anne in 1712. They were then in New York.

On the night of November 25th there was a unique gathering in Brantford when Chief William Smith acted as chairman while the chiefs of the Mohawks and Senecas, Oneidas, Cayugas, Tuscaroras, and Delawares also sat on the platform. Chief Echo of the Onondagas opened the council meeting. Under the auspices of the Canadian Club, Principal H. F. Gardiner of the Ontario Institute for the Blind, gave a comprehensive sketch of Brant's life and suggested that the Canadian Club might mark the place where Joseph Brant lived between the Mohawk church and the locks at the river by the erection of a stone monument.

According to Principal Gardiner's account, the Indian tribe to which Joseph Brant belonged dwelt, in the Eighteenth Century, in the valley of the Mohawk, a river which empties into the Hudson about ten miles north of Albany. Joseph, however, was born on the banks of the Ohio in 1742. He attended Dr. Wheelock's school at Lebanon, Connecticut, from 1759 to 1761. "The labours which he performed as a translator of the Scriptures, his letters and speeches and his intimate friendship with learned men indicate that Brant attained considerable literary culture. . . . An illiterate savage could not have been esteemed by men like Boswell, Sheridan, the Earl of Moira and the Duke of Northumberland, as Brant undoubtedly was."

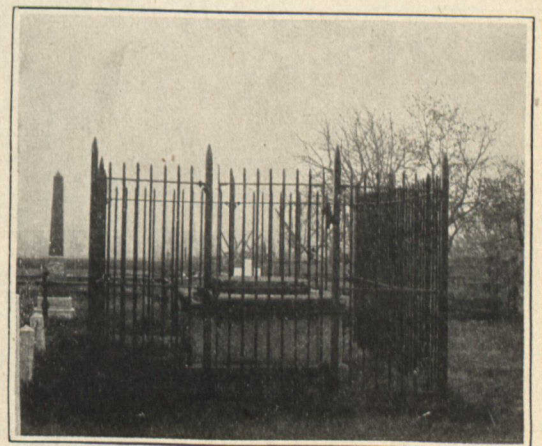
But Brant the soldier is the aspect under which the popular historian is most familiar with that picturesque figure. When he was only thirteen years of age, Brant fought under Sir William Johnson at Lake George in 1755 and in 1763 Brant engaged in warfare against the Ottawa chief, Pontiac. On the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War, Brant warmly supported the British cause. For years he carried on raids on the New York settlements but was defeated by General Sullivan at Newton in 1779. Colonel Stone writes regarding Brant:

"Whether in the conduct of a campaign or of a scouting party, in the pitched battle or the foray, this crafty and dauntless chieftain was sure to be one of the most efficient, as he was one of the bravest of those who were engaged. Combining with the native hardihood and sagacity of his race the advantages of education and of civilised life—in acquiring which he had lost nothing of his activity or his power of endurance—he became the most formidable border foe, with whom the Provincials had to contend and his name was a terror to the land."

As might have been expected, the United States historians and novelists have tried to represent Brant as a monster, but there is proof that more than once he spared foes whom he might have destroyed. In 1784, Sir Frederick Haldimand declared that the Six Nations and their posterity should possess and enjoy a tract of land six miles in depth on either side of the Grand River from its mouth to the Elora Falls, a distance of 100 miles, in compensation for the land in New York which they had forfeited. In 1796, owing to the encroachment of white settlers Brant was given by the chiefs a formal power of attorney in disposal of these lands, but until long after Brant's death, that is to say until 1830, the entire area of what is now Brantford township remained in possession of the Six Nations Indians. Brant devoted his best energies to serving his own race and, on his death in 1807, was mourned as a great chief. His body was buried in the graveyard near the old Mohawk church but in 1850 the

remains of the two chiefs, Joseph Brant and his son, John, were re-interred in one common vault, on which occasion Rev. A. Nelles, Rev. Peter Jones, Sir Allan Macnab and D. Thorburn, Esquire, were among the speakers. In proof of Brant's excellent qualities as citizen when the troubled years of warfare were over, we have the fact that one of his first stipulations with the commander-in-chief, on the acquisition of his new territory, was for the building of a church, a school-house and a flour mill and he soon made application for a resident clergyman. The first Church of England erected in Upper Canada is said to have been built by Brant from funds collected by him while in England in 1786. The communion service is of beaten silver, each piece bearing an inscription stating it to have been given to the Mohawks for the use of their chapel by Queen Anne—for the service had been carefully guarded through the years in which the Indians were being driven from the Mohawk valley. The church bell was made by John Warner, Fleet Street, London, 1786.

The Canadian Club of Brantford showed a commendable desire to honour the memory of a spirited and indomitable pioneer by engaging such a capable speaker as Principal Gardiner to present the salient facts in the life of Captain Joseph Brant, British officer and Indian Chief.



Brant's Tomb.

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