

CHAPTER II.

THE FEAST OF HARVEST.

A FEW days later came the Maize-Harvest Feast at Hochelaga. All the night before the principal house of each of the three clans—Turtle, Bear and Wolf—rang with voices of women. For a maiden was being chosen and adorned by those of each clan to represent, or, in their thought, *to be* one of the Three, Beneficent Spirits in the Festival.

In the house of the Turtle, although discussion was long, it was not over the choice of their maiden, since all were agreed upon the orphan Quenhia, the child of the Ghost.

“What is the custom, O grandmother?” they enquired of the most venerable matron the white-haired Kâwi, The-Oldest-Woman-That-Ever-Lived.

“Our ancestors said: ‘Ye shall choose the most beautiful,’” muttered the ancient Kâwi; and her decision was revered. And as no one thought of any other than Quenhia when beauty was the standard, they called the young girl to the side of Kâwi’s fire near the sunset