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With the author's kind regards and best wishes

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FROM THE TRANSACTIONS OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

SECOND SERIES—1895-96

VOLUME I.

SECTION II.

ENGLISH HISTORY, LITERATURE, ARCHÆOLOGY

An Iroquois Condoling Council

A STUDY OF

Aboriginal American Society and Government

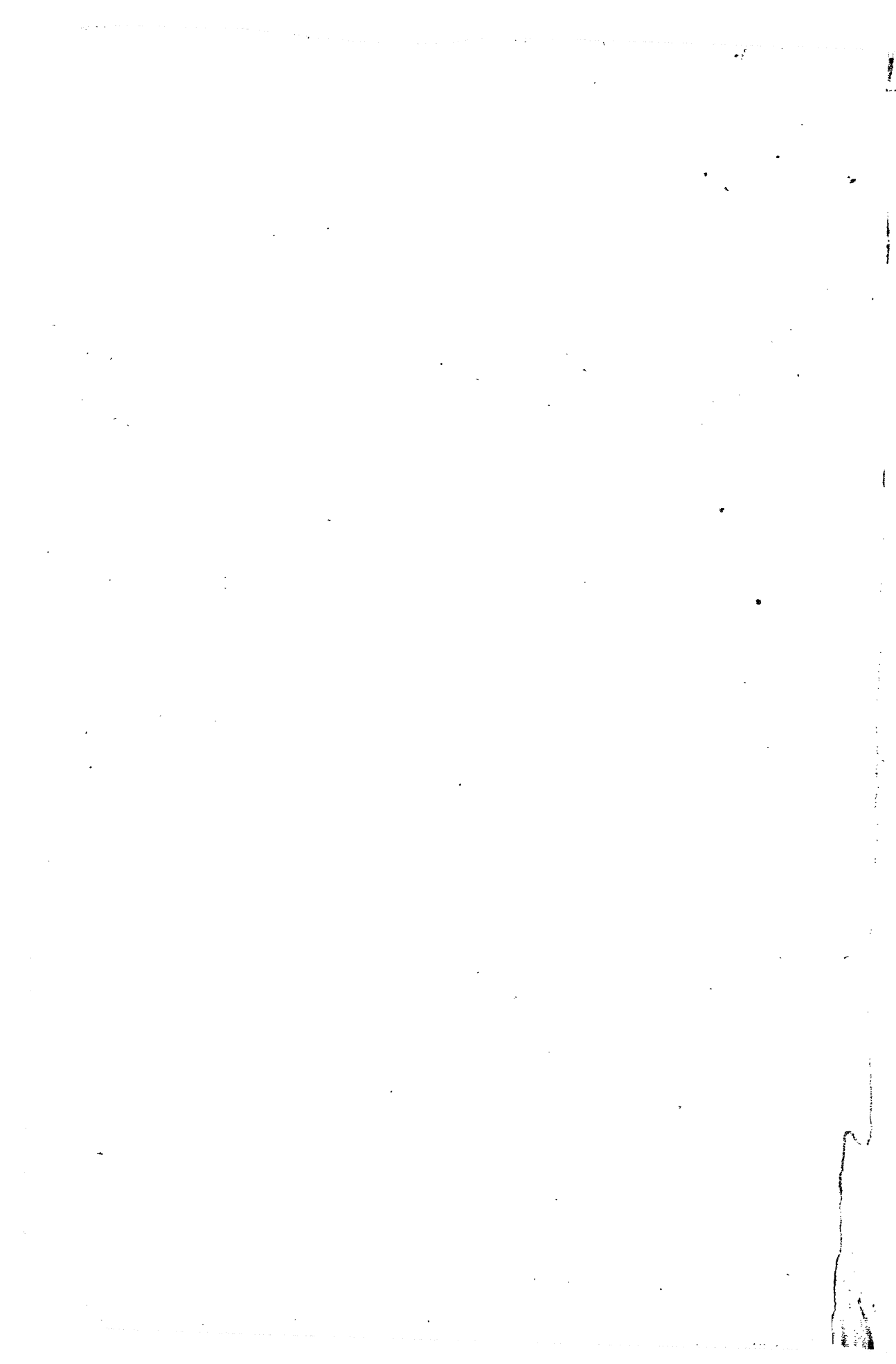
By HORATIO HALE, M.A. (Harvard), F.R.S.C.

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BERNARD QUARITCH, LONDON, ENGLAND

1895



II.—*An Iroquois Condoling Council.*

By HORATIO HALE, M.A. (Harvard).

(Read May 15, 1895.)

The remarkable confederacy of Indian tribes which, under the name of the "Five Nations" (and later the "Six Nations"), formerly bore sway, from their central abode in northern New York, over a large portion of what is now the United States and Canada, and who may be said to have held for a century the balance of power on this continent between England and France, possessed a form of government which, even while imperfectly understood, excited the curiosity and admiration of many intelligent inquirers. The early Jesuit missionaries, and, after them, Cadwallader Colden, Sir William Johnson, De Witt Clinton and other observers and writers of equal note, had told much about them, all bestowing high praise on the consummate political ability manifested in their league, but all, as it finally appeared, with only a very imperfect understanding of the true basis and real nature, origin and objects of this league. It remained for our own time and for the genius of a scientific investigator of the first order of intellectual power, the late Hon. L. H. Morgan of Rochester, N. Y., to disclose the secrets of this wonderful system—a system so intricately wrought, so profoundly based, so far-reaching, and so beneficently purposed, that its details recorded in his famous book, "The League of the Ho-de-no-sau-nee or Iroquois" (published in 1851), while awakening the admiration of all its readers, have in certain respects staggered the belief of some of the most eminent among them. Some justly esteemed historical writers, with large claims to philosophical insight, have been unable to accept the assurance that the primary object of the "high chiefs" representing the Iroquois tribes in their first council of alliance—"barbarians of the stone age" though they were—was to establish a form of government which should not only prevent strife among their own tribes, but might be so extended as to put an end to war among all nations, and to bring about universal peace. A greater philosopher, whose mental vision has been large enough to embrace all races, civilized and savage, and their known political systems, ancient and modern, has found no such difficulty. Mr. Herbert Spencer, in his recent volume, "The Principles of Ethics," quotes Morgan's statement on this point, accepts it without reserve, confirms it by other examples, and points out the facts of human nature on which they are all based. Every government reflects the character of the people who frame it or who willingly submit to it. A people, whether barbarous or civilized, who among themselves are peaceful and united, will have a government tending to peace and unity, both

at home and with other communities. And, on the other hand, a tribe or nation of selfish and quarrelsome people, whatever may be their state of culture, will have a selfish and quarrelsome government.

It was my fortune to carry forward the investigations of my friend, Mr. Morgan, under circumstances somewhat more favourable than those which had enabled him to achieve such admirable results. The league which he so well describes was not studied by him in its complete frame and living action, but only in its fragments, and from the reports of former members, long after its disruption and the exile of the great body of its component tribes. As is well known, the majority of the Six Nations, under the influence of Sir William Johnson and his family, adhered to the British side in the American War of Independence, and at its close removed to Canada. There, on land that had once been under the rule of the confederacy, comprising the fertile plains which border the Grand River, and which now form part of the county of Brant (so named from their leading war-chief), they restored, or rather continued, their political system, in all its primitive forms and vigour, which it still retains. Of this system I have given a brief account in a paper read before the American Association for the Advancement of Science at its annual meeting in 1881, and published in the proceedings of that year, and a much fuller description in a volume entitled "The Iroquois Book of Rites," published in 1883 in Dr. Brinton's well-known Library of American Aboriginal Literature. The particulars comprised in these descriptions were mainly gathered during many visits to the "Six Nations' Reserve," near Brantford, Ont., and in great part through the invaluable mediation and assistance of my late friend, Chief George H. M. Johnson, whose hospitable home (from which he took his Indian name of Onwanonshyon, "Lord of the Great House")—an elegant and stately mansion known as "Chiefswood," embowered in a fine park and overlooking the "wide and winding" Grand River—was my agreeable abode during these visits.

I may be pardoned for a few personal references to this much esteemed friend and his family. Mr. Johnson was both an Iroquois chief and an Anglo-Canadian gentleman, and in both capacities was highly respected. He was the son of a leading chief, who had held for many years the office of Speaker of the Six Nations' Council, and had been noted for his silver-tongued eloquence. This chief was himself of half-blood origin, as was also his wife. Chief George traced his pedigree on the one side to a high Anglo-American source, and on the other to one of the great chiefs, fifty in number, who were the chosen colleagues of the founder of the league. This founder was the famous Hiawatha—no mythological personage, but an Onondaga chief,—who lived about four centuries ago, and whose name, and the names of his companions in the first council, descended, like those of the first two Cæsars, or like the terri-

torial names of English peers, to be titles of honour for their successors. Chief George's title, which he had received from this ancient progenitor on his mother's side, was Teyonhehkon, meaning "Double Life." I have known many other bearers of these antique titles (several of whom will be named in this narrative), and among them a modern Hiawatha, a handsome young chief, whose pleasing face and graceful bearing might fairly enough have represented the poetical hero whom Longfellow, using the licence of his art, has transported to the shores of Lake Superior and made the Ojibway lover of Minnehaha. Mr. Johnson held also a humbler but more lucrative title, that of Government Interpreter for the Reserve, which made him the *ex-officio* aide and executive officer of the Visiting Superintendent of the Reserve, Col. Gilkison. He had been well educated by the English missionaries, and had married a missionary's sister, an accomplished English lady, a kinswoman of one of the most admired of American authors, Mr. W. D. Howells. That the children of this union should be above the average, in mind as well as in person, might be expected. Those who have seen and heard one of them, Miss E. Pauline Johnson, the charming poet and reciter, will know the source of the grace and talent which have delighted many audiences.

Though I had attended many public ceremonies and festivals of the Indians, in company with these and other friends, I had not, when my book was composed, had the opportunity of witnessing the rarest and by far the most important of them all. I had, however, given a chapter to it, derived partly from the reports of others who had often attended it, and partly from two remarkable native manuscripts which are described in the volume. This ceremony is the "Condoling Council," at which a deceased chief is publicly lamented, and his successor is endowed with his office and title, and is formally received into the Great Council of the league. It is styled by Morgan the "Mourning Council," but my Iroquois friends preferred the rendering which I have given to the native name, as more clearly expressing the sympathetic nature of the ceremony. Morgan's description is excellent, and any one who refers to it will see in the narrative now to be given from my journal how closely, after the lapse of more than thirty years from the time he wrote, and amid widely different surroundings, the ancient rites have been adhered to. If I am not mistaken, the mingling of civilized customs and manners with these antique ceremonials adds to them a piquancy which makes up for the loss of some of the solemnity that anciently attended them. The following description is a literal copy of my journal written at the time, with merely the omission of a few personal matters and the addition of some needed explanations. I have retained, moreover, certain particulars which will give evidence of the remarkable advance in civilization that had been made by these Indians in less than a century. They may help to dissipate the prejudices, if any still exist, which at one time pronounced the

American aboriginal tribes incapable of competing with the whites in the arts of cultured life.

July 16th, 1883.—This morning I received a letter from my good friend, Mrs. Johnson of Chiefswood, informing me that the Condoling Council, after many postponements, was finally fixed to take place to-morrow. I started by the early afternoon train for Onondaga station, where I had a pleasant greeting from my young friends, Misses Eva and Pauline. I drove with them to Chiefswood, and met the usual cordial reception. The chief was in the field, assisting his tenant with the hay, but promptly made his appearance. He had just received word from Col. Gilkison that his services as interpreter and secretary would to-morrow be required elsewhere on the Reserve about some important public business, and he will therefore be unable to accompany me to the Onondaga "Long-House," where the council is to be held; but as this will not commence until noon, he hopes to join me there early enough in the afternoon to give me all necessary help in the way of explanations.

July 17th.—Soon after eleven I started with old Peter—a good-natured old Mohawk who helps about Chiefswood as hostler and factotum. We drove eastward along the south bank of the Grand River, which is now full from the recent rains, and is a noble stream. The country wore its most attractive aspect—the trees in full foliage, the crops and meadows luxuriant. After passing the Middleport Ferry we turned southward toward the centre of the Reserve. I remarked the usual signs of improvement which I observe at every visit—new buildings, the fences and fields in better condition, in one place a large brick school-house lately completed, in another a row of young trees planted for a quarter of a mile along the roadside fence. On the farms substantial frame and log-houses alternate, and there are some good barns—on one farm two of these buildings, with a general air of thrift and good cultivation. Turning out of the main road, down a winding track, through low trees and bushes, we came to a small clearing, in which several wag-gons stood, with horses tethered. At a little distance the Onondaga Long House appeared on an eminence beyond.

Fastening our horse in the shade of a tree, with a good supply of newly-cut hay, we took the path over a style and up the acclivity to the Council House. On approaching it we found a little group of men seated on the sward, among whom I distinguished the pleasant features of my friend, Chief John Buck (Skanawati), and the grave aspect of my old Clinton acquaintance, John Fraser, now a high chief of the Mohawk nation, with a sesquipedalian title which I remembered. Taking a place beside them, I greeted them by their Indian titles, which called forth good-humoured smiles from the circle. Just then a rather tall, slender young man, well dressed, and with a highly intelligent countenance, whose features, complexion and manner might have enabled him to pass for a

gentleman from the south of Europe, came up and was introduced to me as Chief Alexander G. Smith, the church interpreter. He said that on his way he had met Col. Gilkison and Chief Johnson, and had been specially enjoined by them to render me all the assistance in his power, which he would be glad to do. I learned that he had been left an orphan in early childhood, and had by his own exertions made his way up in a very creditable manner. He had prevailed on the authorities to send him to the Mohawk Institute, where he made such good proficiency that he had been transferred to the Brantford High School. Afterwards he had taught a school for a year or two, and then, on the death of the late church interpreter, Carpenter, he had been appointed to succeed him. Bishop Helmuth had been his friend, and had offered to furnish him with \$100 a year towards the expense of a university education; but in the meantime he had married, and had a young family growing up, whose support required his exertions at home. He still found time to continue his studies, and was now forming a library of books relating to the Indians, in which he solicited my advice and assistance.

Presently we retreated from the sun into the Council House, where I found, among others, my distinguished acquaintances the Onondaga chief, John Gibson (Atotarho), and his son of the same English name, the intelligent blind chief and maker of lacrosse-bats, who bears, in the right of his Seneca mother, the title of Kanyadariyo. Both greeted me in friendly fashion. Chief John Buck said they were now all going to a neighbouring house for dinner, and invited me to join them; but as I had brought some lunch—through the provident kindness of Mrs. Johnson,—I remained in the Council House, which was left for a time to my sole occupation. Before long, however, knots of newly arrived chiefs began to collect on the sward before the building. On joining them I found several acquaintances among them, who told me that the chiefs of the younger nations (Oneidas, Cayugas, Tuscaroras and others) were assembling at the Cayuga Long-House, a mile or two distant. Before long a grave, middle-aged person came to us, with a business-like air, from that direction. He was, I learned, a messenger, sent to inform us that the condoling party were ready to make their appearance, and desired to know if we were prepared to receive them. As the chiefs who were to be lamented on this occasion belonged to the elder nations (that is, were either Mohawks, Onondagas or Senecas), the duty of condolence fell on the junior members of the confederacy. The messenger was told to inform his friends that all would be ready in a short time for what is known as the preliminary ceremony, bearing in Indian the ponderous name of *Deyuhnyonkwarakda*, which, being interpreted, is the "reception at the wood's edge," the last four English words being the literal rendering of the polysyllabic Iroquois term.

John Buck and his companions, including my new friend the church

interpreter, had now rejoined us, and we all left the Council House in a body, and, crossing a little valley on the north side, came, in something less than a quarter of a mile, to an open space or nook in a belt of woodland which was deemed appropriate for the ceremony. There two young men were already busy in kindling a small fire of chips and branches. Near this ancient symbol of welcome—at which, it was understood, the calumet of friendship was to be lighted—we disposed ourselves on the grass or on fallen tree-trunks, and awaited the coming of our guests. I took the opportunity of making a list of the chiefs of the elder nations who were present at the ceremony. They were:

HIGH CHIEFS.

Onondagas.

English names.	Native names.	Meaning.
John Buck	Skanawati	Beyond the river.
John Gibson	Atotarho	Entangled.
William Buck	Tehatkahtons	Looking both ways.
Johnson Williams	Tehayatkwarayen	Red wings.
William Echo	Hahriron	Scattered.
Elijah Johnson	Ronyenyennih	(Meaning unknown.)
Peter Key	Enneseraron	(Meaning unknown.)

Mohawks.

John Fraser	Ahstawenserontha	Putting on rattles.
Peter Powless	Satekariwate	Two things equal.

Senecas.

David Hill	Kanokarih	Threatened.
John Gibson, Jr.	Kanyadariyo	Beautiful lake.

ASSISTANT CHIEFS.

Alex. G. Smith	Dakanenraneh	Double row of people.
David John	Wahojikwayoha	He could not find a war-club.
Nicholas John	Kanekenthwat	(Name of venomous insect.)

It thus appears that the conservative Onondagas chiefly conduct these ceremonies—which are supposed to have a flavour of paganism about them,—and that few but the high chiefs, *rotiyaner*, take an active part in them.

Mr. Smith says that, as a general rule, each high chief has his assistant chief (or war-chief), though to this there are some exceptions. The assistant chief is usually, but not always, a member of the same family as that of his high chief, and, on the death of the latter, is frequently promoted to his position. If not so promoted, he still remains the assist-

ant chief of the new holder of the title. The assistant chiefs are not only the executive officers of their high chiefs, but in the council they are expected to do most of the speaking. The duty of the high chiefs is to consult together and decide. It is below their dignity to expend their forces in mere speech-making. The assistants have no special titles as chiefs, but continue to be called by their original names. They are, however, usually installed at Condoling Councils, like the high chiefs. Sometimes, however, of late years, they are simply appointed by the Central Council at Ohsweken. It was in this way that he himself had been lately made a chief, the honour having been conferred without any intimation to him that it was coming. He is the assistant of my friend, John Fraser.

While we were conversing, the sound of a measured chant was heard in the distance. All eyes were turned on the neighbouring woods, from which was presently seen to issue the portly form of the Cayuga chief Wage (*Hadwennine*, "His words are moving"), the high constable of the Reserve, who is commonly known as Sheriff Wage. With the dignity of a Roman pontifex, he led the chant and the procession. Behind him followed the line of chiefs of the younger nations—Cayugas, Oneidas, Tuscaroras, Delawares, Nanticokes, and Tutelos, for so far has the confederacy been enlarged by later adoptions. At least all these should have been—and possibly were—represented in the score of farmer-like men, of grave and swarthy visages, who followed the melodious high constable. Beyond them came the brightest part of the spectacle—a little troop of women and girls, dressed in the gayest style of the very pretty fashion which the Indian women of Canada, much to the credit of their good taste, have adopted. Trim bodices, short, spreading skirts of brilliant colours—usually some shade of red,—gay, variegated scarfs and shawls, with broad-rimmed straw hats or bright-hued kerchiefs, and prettily embroidered leggings, make a very attractive garb, especially when seen in a procession or group. When the party came near us the singing ceased. The sheriff arranged his chiefs in a line opposite to us, about ten yards from our own party, who all remained seated as before. A little way from the sheriff's line the women and children grouped themselves about a huge tree-stump, which they hid in a cluster of glowing colours.

It was now the duty of our chiefs to welcome their sympathizing guests. To my surprise, the person deputed to perform this duty was my blind friend, the younger John Gibson (*Kanyadariyo*). A fine musical voice, a good memory, and a pleasing presence, to which his lack of vision added a touch of the pathetic, qualified him well for the office. A friend led him by the arm, and with him walked gravely to, and fro in the space between the hosts and the guests, while the blind singer, with figure upright and visage bent toward the ground before him, intoned in high, quavering notes the chant of welcome, in the precise words in which it is given in the Book of Rites. There were, of course, many pauses

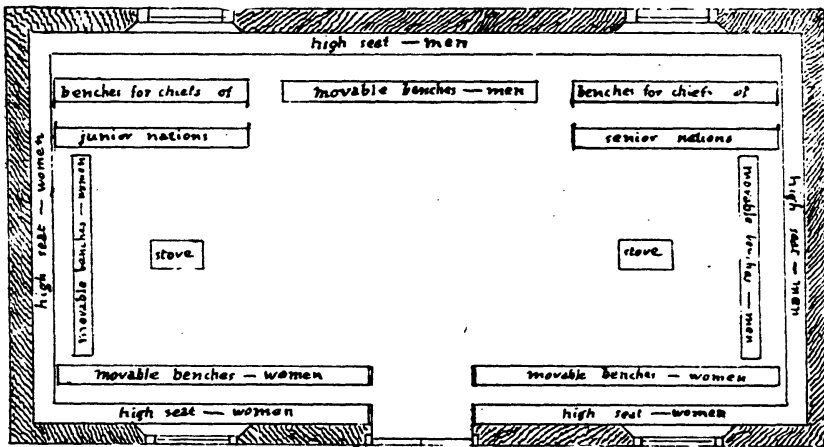
between the periods, which were filled up with long-drawn utterances of the musical interjection, *Haih-haih*, without which an Iroquois chant seems impossible. With this exception, if such it can be called, the chief's remarkable memory enabled him to follow the traditionary words quite accurately, and even to recite in proper order the long list of names of ancient towns, where there was nothing in the sense to guide his recollection. I thus learned—what I had not before understood—that this portion of the Book of Rites was intended to be, not spoken, but sung. Subsequently it appeared that the remainder of the book, including even the "Laws of the League," was in the same category.

When the blind singer had finished and was led back to his place, Chief Wage advanced, and, holding some strings of wampum in his hand, made in his ordinary tones a brief address of condolence, to which a chief on our side responded in the same manner. At this point the pipe should have been lighted at the fire of welcome and passed around. Why this part of the ancient ceremony was omitted I did not at the moment think of inquiring. It was perhaps to save time, as the day was well advanced. Suddenly, at the close of their spokesman's address, our chiefs arose, and led the way in loose procession to the Council House, followed by their people, and at a little distance by their guests in a separate file. Many more women and children had then come up, and now joined in the line. As the long varicoloured train wound through the trees and across the valley, it made a pretty view, and we got a glimpse at last of what the assembling of a Condoling Council of the ancient times may have been.¹

On our arrival at the Council House the chiefs in our party set themselves in some haste to arrange the benches in what was deemed a suitable style. The house is the same large edifice of hewed logs which I first visited in September, 1871, and then described in my journal. Its one apartment, forming a spacious oblong hall, about fifty feet in length by twenty-five in width, is now improved in appearance by a ceiling of

¹ To show the persistence of Indian usages, it may be interesting to note that this reception of guests with a bonfire of welcome conforms exactly to that which the explorer Jacques Cartier experienced in his first approach to the "City of Hochelaga," in October, 1535. In the narrative of his voyage, as rendered by Hakluyt, we read:—"The City of Hochelaga is six miles from the riverside, and the road thither is as well-beaten and frequented as can be, leading through as fine a country as can be seen, full of fine oaks as any in France, the whole ground being strewn over with fine acorns. When we had gone four or five miles we were met by one of the great lords of the city, accompanied by a great many natives, who made us understand by signs that we must stop at a place where they had made a large fire, which we did accordingly. When we had rested there some time, the chief made a long discourse in token of welcome and friendship, showing a joyful countenance and every mark of goodwill." The Hurons of Hochelaga were, as the words of their language preserved by Cartier sufficiently prove, nearly akin to the Iroquois of New York,—though at the time of Cartier's visit the two kindred communities were involved in a deadly warfare, brought on, according to their traditions, by the fault of the Hochelagans, and ending in their defeat and dispersion.

matched pine boards, planed, but fortunately unpainted. A high fixed seat, raised one step, extends along the sides and ends. In front of this are many movable benches, so that a double—and if necessary a triple—row of spectators can be ranged around the walls. On the present occasion two of the corners, the northwest and the northeast, were reserved for the chiefs—the former for those of the elder and the latter for those of the junior nations. To accommodate each party and enable its members readily to consult together, the movable benches at each corner were turned face to face, with an open space between them, thus:



The benches were hardly arranged when the people pressed in and filled them. At another season, I am told, particularly in the winter, the number in attendance would have been much larger; but just now the farmers are unwilling to lose a fine day from their hay harvest. As it was, however, the number—something over 200—was quite sufficient to fill the benches, and make the air of the hall uncomfortably close and warm, in spite of the open windows. The men and youths took one side of the room, the women and girls the other. The bright colours of the feminine ranks, row above row, made an agreeable contrast to the sombre lines of the opposite seats. Many of the women held babies, who were mostly as silent and, but for their black eyes, as motionless as dolls. As the long hours wore on, an occasional wail from some small parched lips was heard, but was quickly hushed by a prompt supply of their natural nutriment. Otherwise a grave and even solemn stillness seemed to hold the whole assemblage.

The silence was interrupted by an elderly Cayuga chief, Jacob Silversmith (*Teyothorehkonh*, "Doubly Cold"), who arose to begin the condoling chant—the great duty of the day. He was a tall man, of

heavily moulded figure and features, clad in the plain costume of a substantial farmer, and bearing in his hand a staff, with which he seemed to time his steady walk. Placing himself near the side of the wall occupied by the chiefs and their followers, he paced slowly to and fro from one end of the room to the other, chanting in a high, strong, not unmusical voice, with his face inclined a little forward, and his eyes steadily fixed on the floor. His look was that of a man engaged in a serious and important duty, which forbade him to spare himself or his hearers one moment of time or one quaver of his voice. He began with the Condoling Song repeating each line twice, as I have heard it sung by John Buck, with many ejaculations of "*haih-haih*" between the lines. Then, to my surprise, he took up the concluding litany of the Book of Rites, the hymn to the fifty chiefs and councillors, the founders of the League. It subsequently appeared that he left the intermediate portion of the ritual to be chanted by another singer. The litany was sung, not in its abridged form as printed, but with all the lines which, in the written and printed copies, have been omitted near the close, for brevity's sake, and which were now duly pealed forth in honour of the leaders of each ancestral clan. These lines (substituting "all hail" for "*haih-haih*") have been thus rendered :

" This was the roll of you !
 All hail ! all hail ! all hail !
 You that combined in the work !
 All hail ! all hail ! all hail !
 You that completed the work !
 All hail ! all hail ! all hail !
 The Great League !
 All hail ! all hail ! all hail !"

These interminable repetitions, with their endless exacerbation of "*haih-haihs*," was a fearful infliction ; but the sedate assembly bore it with unmoved patience. Every now and then a brief chorus of assent would be heard from the chiefs at either corner—a slow murmur, rising unexpectedly and dying away. It should be remembered that the word here rendered "League" (*Kayanerenh*) meant originally and properly "peace." It was the "great peace" among the nations, which was established by Hiawatha and his companions, that their successors in the Council had been taught to celebrate, and to impress upon the people by these elaborate ceremonies. When this fact is considered, the proceedings acquire a dignity and importance which will account for the impression produced on the assembled hearers, and which make them really worthy of our admiration. Toward the close the singer gave some signs of exhaustion. But when he sat down there was no appearance of relief in the audience. In fact, they knew that there was much more to come.

He closed abruptly, and quietly took his seat with the other chiefs of the junior nations. A pause of profound silence ensued. After a time

two young men came forward with a rope, which they drew across the room near the ceiling, where they made it fast. Over this rope was hung a patchwork quilt, in such a manner as to shut off from the chiefs of the senior nations the sight of their sympathizing guests of the junior nations. This curtain, which was doubtless in former days a screen of skins or of bark matting, was, I was told, a sign of mourning. The blind chief, Kanyadariyo, was then led from the seat which he held with the senior party, and conducted to a place behind the curtain, among the chiefs of the younger nations. He was supposed, I think, to become one of them for the nonce,—perhaps because no member of their party was as well qualified to repeat the chant of the “Laws of the League” which was to follow. From the corner behind the curtain was now heard the Condoling Song, sung this time very sweetly, the musical voice of the blind Kanyadariyo leading the chant. When it was finished he was led forward by another chief, who conducted him up and down the hall, while he sang in high, clear tones the invocation to their forefathers, and chanted the ancient laws which these had made, “to strengthen the house.” Now and then he would pause, while the chiefs behind the curtain sang in chorus the last line of the Condoling Song. “*Ronkehsotah, kajathondek!*” (“O Grandsires, hear us!”) “*Haih-haih! haih-haih! Kajathondek! kajathondek!*” (“Hail! hail! Hear us! hear us!”) they repeated, till their voices died away in a sharp condoling wail, and the singer recommenced his chant.

I thus learned, as already stated, that the whole Book of Rites is sung, or rather intoned, after their fashion. It is, in fact, an ancient historical chant; and this accounts for the great accuracy with which it has been transmitted from one generation to another. They have continued to sing the words even after the meaning of some of them has become uncertain. If the contents of the book had been printed as they are repeated in the Council, the sentences should have been divided into brief lines, like blank verse. The genuine poetical character of the composition is now disguised by its prosaic form and rendering, precisely as is the case with the psalms and the prophetic books of the Old Testament in the ordinary version.

When Kanyadariyo had ceased, he returned to his seat in his proper corner among the elder nations. The curtain was now removed, and the two parties, the hosts and the condoling guests, were again brought into the view of one another. Then a Cayuga chief, Montour (whose native name I did not learn)—in whose fine, intelligent face the traits of his French descent were apparent,—arose to express the condolence of the younger nations. My friend, the church interpreter, was not familiar with the Cayuga dialect, and was, as he told me, perplexed by the fact that in the present recitation (as I could myself perceive) there was a continual repetition of certain particles or interjections, which would not

have been used in ordinary speech. However, he could understand enough to be able to say that the speaker was reciting the various topics of consolation, much as they are contained in the Onondaga portion of the printed Book of Rites, though generally at greater length. He "came before the mourners where they were bowed in great darkness," and "stood beside the ashes of their hearth, and sought to comfort them." He "mourned for the chief who had passed away, and who had been sent to work for the good of them all—of the warriors, the women and the children. Sooner or later they would all follow him to the grave. Meanwhile they would show their reverence for his memory. They would deck his grave, and cover it carefully, so that the rain should not penetrate into it. And he now wiped away the tears of the mourners, and bade the bright sun again shine upon them. They must remember that they had their duties to the people to perform, in the place of the chiefs who were gone." And finally he called upon them to show him the men who were proposed as candidates in place of the deceased chiefs.

While Montour spoke, he held in his hand a string of wampum, or sometimes two or three strings united together. When he had finished one topic or section of his speech, he handed the string, or knot of strings, to an attendant, who with a measured pace bore it along the hall to the upper corner, where he delivered it to Chief Skanawati (John-Buck), the spokesman of the elder nations. The wampum beads were variously disposed in these strings, according to the topic which they intended to recall. For instance, the most mournful subject—the reference to the death of the late chief—was indicated by a string entirely black. The complete consolation of the shining sun was figured by a string or knot of pure white beads. In some of the other strings the white beads predominated, and in others the black. They varied also in their length, and in the number (from one to three strings) appropriated to each topic.

The style of recitation was somewhat remarkable. It was neither singing nor ordinary speaking, but a mode of utterance evidently peculiar to this part of the ceremony. He spoke in brief sentences, each commencing with a high, sudden, explosive outburst, and gradually sinking to the close, where it ended abruptly, in a quick, rising inflection. The whole was plainly a set form of phrases, which the speaker was reciting with a sort of perfunctory fervour. Occasionally there was a brief response—a low wail of assent—from the upper corner, where the chiefs of the elder nations sat motionless, with their faces bowed, during the whole recital. The ceremony had taken nearly an hour, and some eleven or twelve of the wampum tokens had passed before it was completed.

Three hours had now been occupied by this monotonous chanting and recitation, and I hoped that the end had been reached. The silent

and patient auditors, however, were better informed. The ancient custom requires that the nations who have been comforted shall return a suitable response and acknowledgment. Once more the Condoling Song was commenced—this time from the eastern corner. Chief Skanawati led the chant in a high, clear voice. In the chorus the sweet musical notes of the blind Kanyadariyo and the deep bass voice of his father, Atotarho, could be heard. Twenty strong male voices mingled their powerful harmony, swelling and falling like the moan of a wind rushing through the forest. As thus chanted, the "hymn" became exciting; and I now understood why it was known among them as the "Stirrer" or "Rouser."

Skanawati, who was seated on the upper bench, next to the wall, now rose, and holding in his hand one of the wampum strings which he had received from Montour, expressed the thanks of the elder nations for the sympathy of their younger allies—their "offspring," as he termed them. He then repeated in due order each topic of consolation, to show that it had been duly weighed and appreciated. As he closed each section thus recited, he handed its indicatory string, or knot of strings, to an attendant, who bore it solemnly down the hall, and replaced it in the hands of Chief Montour. This repetition was made in the same brief and sharp sentences, and the same high artificial tones, which had marked their original delivery. It occupied nearly as much time, and still the patience of the motionless audience seemed unexhausted.

At length, however, the speaker's voice abruptly ceased. He took his seat, and a slight movement was apparent throughout the assemblage, such as occurs in a meeting for public worship when the regular services are closed, but some other ceremony is expected to follow. It was now growing dark, and some young men proceeded to light the lamps in the sconces which were ranged along the walls of the room. The light brought out the scene more vividly than before—the lines of swarthy, impassive faces, the motionless figures, the gay dresses of the women, and the dull hues of the opposite benches. There was a general air of expectation, and all eyes were turned towards the corner where the chiefs of the senior nation were seated. Presently Skanawati again rose, and, leaving his seat, took his post near the eastern end of the hall. Addressing the chiefs of the junior nations, he said that they had called upon the nations who had lost their councillors to bring forth the candidates who were expected to replace them. On behalf of the Onondaga nation, he would now offer them one to take the place of his brother, Rononhwirehton (George Buck), or, as he pronounced the name in its Onondaga form, Hononhwiehti. A young man of intelligent aspect came forward and stood by the side of the orator, who proceeded to say that the family of the deceased chief, represented by their "Chief Matron," considered that they had no member better qualified for the office than the man whom he now presented to the Council. He was young, but they believed he had

good natural abilities, and that he would, with the experience he must soon acquire, be able to fulfil the duties of the office properly, and become a useful member of the Council. Skanawati spoke in his ordinary tones, and in the manner of a sensible man of business addressing a public association. At the close of his remarks, the chiefs of the younger nations responded by expressions of assent.

A similar ceremony ensued with the successor of the Seneca chief, known in English as John Burnham (or Burning), who bore the title of Sadekaronhies ("As Long as the Sky")—the name of one of the six great leaders who framed the original League of the Five Nations. Then followed two proceedings which showed in a good light the practical working of their legislative system. The chief who held the eminent title of Tekarihoken, the first on the Council roll, was unable or disinclined to perform any longer the duties of a councillor, and had declared his desire of retiring. Chief Skanawati now proposed that the Council should accept his resignation and appoint a successor. As it chanced, however, there was no member of the family to whom the title belonged old enough to undertake the duties of a councillor. Under these circumstances, it was necessary to appoint some person of another family, but of the same nation (the Mohawk), to hold the office temporarily. The choice being now comparatively unrestricted, it might be presumed that a well-qualified person would be selected. In fact, the candidate proposed as the *locum tenens* was a middle-aged man of very intelligent aspect—one who, judged merely by his appearance, would have been a desirable acquisition to any deliberative assembly. He was well received by the chiefs to whom he was presented.

Skanawati then announced that the Council had found it necessary to exercise the right which it possessed of deposing an unworthy member. A chief had been proved guilty of selling intoxicating liquor on the Reserve. This was a breach of the law, and a public injury, and the Council had decided to degrade and expel him, and to appoint his assistant chief in his place. This announcement was received with the usual expressions of assent, and the leader of the administration—which is evidently Skanawati's position—quietly returned to his seat.

The leader on the other side, Hadwennine (Sheriff Wage), then rose and observed that it was the desire of the nations for whom he spoke, that he should welcome the newly received members and give them some instructions as to their duties. He requested them therefore to come forward. The three new members (the promoted chief not being apparently regarded in that light) advanced into the middle of the room, and stood there in a row, the two younger men looking rather sheepish under the concentrated gaze of the assemblage. The orator then addressed them in a speech of considerable length. They were told that as they were now members of the Great Council of the League, it would be their duty to learn the rules and forms of the Council, and to conform to them.

They must always bear in mind that the Council was constituted for the good of the whole confederacy. They should put aside all thoughts of self in their public acts, and should think only of the good of the whole people, and not merely of the people who were now living, but also of those who would come after them. If they acted on this principle, they would find, when they arrived at the close of their labours, that they had won the gratitude and affection of their people, and, more than this, those who came after them would bless their memory.

These sentiments, modern and democratic as they seem, are in precise accordance with the Book of Rites, especially in its Onondaga portion, and are doubtless in substance the same exhortations to which newly inducted members of the Council have listened from time immemorial. When the speaker had closed his fatherly admonitions, the new members took their seats among the chiefs of the senior nations, and the business of the Council was concluded.

Chief Skanawati presently arose and remarked that the banquet would soon be forthcoming, and if, in the meantime, any person present desired to address the assembly, an opportunity was now offered. I felt tolerably certain that the occasion would be improved, for these Indians, like my New England compatriots and the Scotch, have an insatiable desire for making and hearing addresses on moral questions and things in general. Presently an Onondaga chief, Johnson Williams (*Tehatkwarayen*), a middle-aged man, with a clear-cut, intellectual countenance, and a self-possessed and somewhat humorous expression, arose and remarked that if some of the younger people present were becoming a little impatient it did not at all surprise him. As everyone knew that after the feast there would be a dance, it was natural to suppose that the young men and maidens would look forward to it with more satisfaction than they had received from the impressive speeches they had just heard. A murmur of laughter which ran along the front benches showed that the speaker had here made a hit. He warned them, however, that they should be careful to conduct all their amusements with moderation and propriety. Especially they should see that no strong liquors were introduced. It would be contrary to their laws, and a great injury to the cause of order and morality. He hoped that if any ill-minded person should attempt such a thing, whoever knew of it would take care to have him exposed and punished. He added some further words of exhortation, which were received, like all the other speeches, with silent attention, and he took his seat as the heralds of the feast appeared.

These were two strong young men, who bore on their shoulders a stout pole, to which were suspended, between them, two large iron kettles, that sent forth an appetizing odour. These kettles contained the 'corn-soup,' or broth of Indian corn, in which the meat had been boiled. One of the kettles was set on the floor at each end of the hall. Two other

youths brought in the meat on large wooden trenchers. The venison of former days was now replaced by beef, which, it is only just to say, for flavour and tenderness did credit to the caterers. Although I had been present at a somewhat similar feast on a former occasion, after a dance at the "green-corn festival," I had felt some curiosity to see how the large company now present—numbering nearly three hundred—would be comfortably fed, without dishes or other appliances. On the former occasion most of the guests had brought their tin pannikins or basins with them, but here there was nothing of the sort. The hosts, however, understood their business. A dozen large flour-sacks were brought, filled with loaves of good wheaten bread. Several of the younger chiefs, including my friend, the interpreter, drew forth their knives and set to work to cut up both bread and meat into generous slices, adapted to appetites which had undergone the strain of eight mortal hours of song and oratory. After the Virgilian fashion, the fragment of bread formed a dish, on which the section of meat was laid, and thus, delicately enough, each guest received his or her portion. Then followed pails of very good lemonade, which was carried round and served, with glass goblets, to each person present. They did me the honour of presenting the first glass to me, as the principal guest. Those who wished for corn-soup went to the kettles and took it with the dippers or ladles which were provided for the purpose. The whole company, now much increased by a crowd of young people who had come in when the provisions appeared, was served in a surprisingly short time, and without the slightest disorder. The young chiefs and other attendants did their ministering deftly and quietly. The people kept their seats, and conversed in subdued tones. No public dinner or tea-party of their fastidious white neighbours was ever conducted with more propriety and good-breeding than this simple banquet of these self-respecting children of the soil.

It was now getting late, nearly eleven o'clock, and at the conclusion of the supper most of the elders and the children quietly withdrew. The younger men and women remained, and the removal of the kettles and some of the benches showed that the dances were about to begin. As I had seen this performance under more favourable circumstances, I did not wait for it, but summoning the faithful Peter, whose smiling face showed his perfect enjoyment of the occasion, I took leave of my friend Skanawati, who remained at his post as "master of the feast," and sought our conveyance in the neighbouring grove. As we were preparing to start, the loud chant of the musicians, the rhythmical beat of the tortoise-shell rattles, timing the dance, and the vigorous stamp of manly feet upon the well-worn floor of the hall, announced that the social amusement with which the Indians delight to finish their councils had begun. For some distance on our way we could see the lights gleaming brightly through the windows of the Long-House, and hear the musical clamour of the merry-making chorus.

Since the "Condoling Song" or rather Hymn, as it should perhaps be more properly styled, which has been frequently referred to in the foregoing narrative, may help to cast light upon the character and institutions of the Iroquois people, a fuller account of it will not be deemed out of place. The frequent recurrence of this hymn in the solemn rites of the Condoling Council may, without irreverence, be compared to the frequent repetition of the Lord's Prayer in the services of most of our Christian churches. And as the Prayer may be said to indicate the religious and moral traits to which Christians are expected to aspire, so the Condoling Hymn may be deemed to show the qualities which the Iroquois people most esteem in their social and political life. These qualities are in reality widely different from those commonly ascribed to them in our ordinary histories. In these the Indians in general, and the Huron-Iroquois in particular, are represented as a race of fierce and cruel ravagers and murderers. But, as I have said in another place, "the circumstances under which the red and white races have encountered in North America have been such as necessarily to give rise to a wholly false impression in regard to the character of the aborigines. The European colonists, superior in civilization and in the arts of war, landed on the coast with the deliberate intention of taking possession of the country and displacing the natives. The Indians were at once thrown on the defensive. From the very beginning they fought not merely for their land, but for their lives; for it was from their land that they drew the means of living. The Indians must be judged, like every other people, not by the traits which they display in the fury of a desperate warfare, but by their ordinary demeanour in times of peace, and especially by the character of their social and domestic life. On this point, so far as regards the Huron-Iroquois tribes, the testimony of missionaries and of other competent observers who have lived among them, is uniform. At home these Indians are among the most kindly and generous of men. Constant good humour, unflinching courtesy, ready sympathy with distress, and a truly lavish liberality, mark their intercourse with one another. The Jesuit missionaries among the Hurons knew them before intercourse with the whites and the use of ardent spirits had embittered and debased them. The testimony which they have left on record is very remarkable. The missionary Brébeuf, protesting against the ignorant prejudice which would place the Indians on a level with the brutes, gives the result of his observations in emphatic terms. "In my opinion," he writes, "it is no small matter to say of them that they live united in towns, sometimes of fifty, sixty, or a hundred dwellings—that is, of three or four hundred households; that they cultivate the fields from which they derive their food for the whole year; and that they maintain peace and friendship with one another." He doubts "if there is another nation under heaven more commendable in this respect" than

the Huron "Nation of the Bear," among whom he resided. "They have," he declares, "a gentleness and affability almost incredible for barbarians." They keep up "this perfect goodwill," as he terms it, "by frequent visits, by the aid which they give one another in sickness, and by their festivals and social gatherings, whenever they are not occupied by their fields and fisheries, or in hunting or trade." "They are," he continues, "less in their own cabins than in those of their friends. If any one falls sick, and wants something which may benefit him, everybody is eager to furnish it. Whenever one of them has something specially good to eat, he invites his friends, and makes a feast. Indeed, they hardly ever eat alone." Of the Iroquois the missionaries give accounts, which are precisely similar, and therefore need not be quoted.

The keynote of the hymn may be said to be struck by its first line, which consists of but two words, though these require several words of English to translate them. The two words are "*Kayanerenh teskenon-hwèronne*," which are commonly translated, "We come" (or rather "I come," the speaker being understood to represent his whole party) "to salute the League." This rendering, however, is really inadequate. The word *kayanerenh*, as has been already said, means properly "peace," in which sense it is used throughout the Iroquois version of the English prayerbook, in such expressions as "the Prince of Peace," "give peace in our time." Here it is a contracted form of the longer term *Kayanerenh-kowa*, "Great Peace," which is the regular and, so to speak, official name of their league or constitution. Thus the speaker, or rather singer, begins by saluting the League of Peace, whose blessings they enjoy. The next following word, which is often repeated in the hymn, has been deemed important enough, as characteristic of the language, to deserve a fuller analysis.¹ "*Teskenon-hwèronne* is a good example of the comprehensive force of the Iroquois tongue. Its root is *nonhwe* or *nonwe*, which is found in *kenonhwe*s, I love, like, am pleased with—the initial *ke* being the first personal pronoun. In the frequentative form this becomes *kenonhweron*, which has the meaning of 'I salute and thank,' i.e., I manifest by repeated acts my liking or gratification. The *s* prefixed to this word is the sign of the reiterative form—'again I greet and thank.' The terminal syllable *ne* and the prefixed *te* are respectively the signs of the motional and the cis-locative forms—'I come hither again to greet and thank.' A word of six syllables, easily pronounced (and in the Onondaga dialect reduced to five), expresses fully and forcibly the meaning for which eight not very euphonious English words are required. The notion that the existence of these comprehensive words in an Indian language, or any other, is an

¹ This passage from my "Iroquois Book of Rites" has been quoted in my essay on "Language as a Test of Mental Capacity," in vol. ix. of these Transactions. As it properly belongs to the present paper, I have ventured to repeat it here.

evidence of deficiency in analytic power is a fallacy which was long ago exposed by the clear and penetrative reasoning of Duponceau, the true father of American philology. As he has well explained, analysis must precede synthesis. In fact, the power of what might be termed analytic synthesis—the mental power which first resolves words or things into their elements, and then puts them together in new forms—is a creative or co-ordinating force, indicative of a higher natural capacity than the act of mere analysis. The genius which framed the word *teskenonkaweronne* is the same that, working with other elements, produced the steam-engine and the telephone." Elsewhere I have said that "the wealth of forms and the power of expression in the language have impressed every student. Two hundred and fifty years ago the scholarly Jesuit, Brébeuf, compared it to the Greek, and found it in some respects superior. In our own day this opinion has been reinforced by an authority of the greatest weight. Professor Max Müller, who learned the language from a Mohawk undergraduate at Oxford—now an esteemed physician in Canada,—has written of it in terms of singular force. To his mind, he declares, the structure of the language 'is quite sufficient evidence that those who worked out such a work of art were powerful reasoners and accurate classifiers.' Powerful reasoners and accurate classifiers! To appreciate the full strength of these expressions, we must consider whether they could be properly applied to the framers of the great classical tongues of the old world, the Aryan and the Semitic; and we must honestly decide that they could not. The irrational and confused gender system of the Aryan, and the imperfect tense system of the Semitic stock, must exclude them from the comparison. It is a noteworthy fact that the two foremost philologists of Europe and America, Max Müller and Whitney, both devoted students and admirers of the Aryan speech, have compared that speech in its highest developments with the leading American tongues, and both, though differing widely in their linguistic theories on other points, have pronounced in the strongest terms their opinion of the structural superiority of these American languages."

In the next line of the hymn the singer greets the chief's kindred, who are the special objects of the public sympathy. Then he salutes the *oyenkondoh*, a term which has been rendered "warriors." This rendering, however, may have a misleading effect. The word has nothing to do with war, unless in the sense that every grown man in an Indian community is supposed to be a soldier. Except in this hymn the word is now disused. It is apparently derived from *onkwe* (which in one dialectical form becomes *yenkwe*), meaning simply "man." It comprises all the men (the manhood or man-kind) of the nation, as in the following verse the word *wakonnykih*, which is also obsolete, signifies all the women of the people. If there are any barbarians by whom women are treated as

inferiors and made "beasts of burden," the Iroquois are not to be ranked with them. Among them women are held in high esteem, so much so, indeed, that on the death of a chief the women of his family are left to select among his kindred the person whom they deem best qualified to succeed him; and the person whom they choose is rarely rejected by the Council. In the next line the singer invokes the laws which their forefathers established, and he concludes by calling upon his hearers to listen to the wisdom of their forefathers, whom he invokes as if present. As a whole, the hymn may be described as an expression of love of peace, of reverence for the laws and for the dead, and of sympathy with the living. Such is the "National Anthem"—the "Marseillaise"—of the terrible Iroquois.

The lines of the translated hymn have been cast into the metre of Longfellow's "Hiawatha." The version in these lines, however inadequate, will give a better idea of the true force of the original than a bald literal translation. We are to imagine, in the singing, that each line is twice repeated, and is followed by many ejaculations of *Haih-haih!* "All hail!"

"To the Great Peace bring we greeting!
To the dead Chief's kindred, greeting!
To the strong men round him, greeting!
To the mourning women, greeting!
These our grandsires' words repeating,
Graciously, O Grandsires, hear us!"

It may well be understood that these condensed expressions of feeling, striking such varied chords of emotion, and uttered amid impressive surroundings, such as may be inferred from the foregoing narrative, must in former times have produced an extraordinarily powerful effect—as even at the present day, under widely different circumstances, they retain an influence of singular force and persistence. The whole detail of the Condoling Council indicates a frame of polity constructed with consummate skill to include all the methods which experience and reflection had led the founder (and also, as Morgan has suggested, some of his successors, improving on his plans) to deem most effective in establishing and strengthening a state. These were, first, a legislature, or general council, comprising two distinct elements—the one a conservative aristocracy, hereditary in certain families, and constantly renewed and kept vigorous by the clear insight of female suffrage; the other a selected class of non-hereditary councillors, holding both advisory and executive powers,—and the whole system so conditioned as to preserve to the people the utmost democratic freedom and personal equality of rights before the law; and, secondly, institutions of local self-rule, jealously maintained in the several tribes, but combined in a strict federal alliance, and this alliance so devised as not merely to allow but openly

to invite indefinite expansion, with the deliberate purpose of including all nations in a league of universal peace. These are methods and forms all now to be seen in actual existence and operation, and all confirming the positive and unquestionable tradition which ascribes their origin to one master mind, endowed with transcendent genius, forethought, and benevolence. Yet it is clear that the beneficent genius of Hiawatha would have been unavailing if it had not been seconded by the remarkable intellectual and moral qualities of his people—a people whose achievements, institutions, and language show them to have been, in natural capacity and the higher elements of character, not inferior to any race of men of whom history preserves a record.