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THE NEUTRAL NATIONS

The Eries

BY

Mary E. Rose- Holden



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THE NEUTRAL NATIONS.

THE ERIES.

Read before the Hamilton Scientific Association

BY MARY E. ROSE HOLDEN.

"Who then lives to mourn us? None.
What marks our extermination? Nothing."—SENECA.

"Not Hindoo, Afgan, Cushite or Parsee.
The Indian his own prototype must be."

The occupants of the shores of this lake by the ancient and extinct tribe of the Eries, who were once the acknowledged pacificators of the neighboring Indians, and who preceded the Iroquois in warlike and civic power within that basin, gives a melancholy interest to whatever in the existing archaeological remains of the country, serves to restore the memory of their power.

They appear to have been in the plenitude of pre-eminence and of a civilized strength and influence at the period of the first discoveries of the French in the beginning of the seventeenth century. The Wyandot-Hurons at that time had not been disturbed from the possession of their ancient territories on the shores and valley of the St. Lawrence. The Eries seem to possess unique claim to remembrance, which cannot be urged by any other American tribe—a claim still older than the days of Hiawatha, viz.: that of kindling the Council Fires of Peace for all the tribes of the continent.

According to the French Missionaries, the Eries were at the head of the *singular league known as the Neutral Nations*. Their territory extended from the extreme west to the eastern shores of Lake Erie, including the Niagara valley, and of whom the Káu-Kuas, of Seneca fame and tradition, were manifestly only one of the powers. The dispersion of the Eries, according to European writers, took place in 1656; according to Cusick that event occurred at the time of Cabot.

The following facts are well authenticated: The Neutres kept their neutrality until 1634; they had 36 villages in 1641 and a gar-

ri-son of 4,000 warriors, with a total population of 12,000. The first breach of the Covenant was followed by a truce for nine years.

Their history, rise, spread and power and final fall is involved in a degree of obscurity which is all the more stimulating from the few gleams of tradition given. There is no doubt that the Institution of the Pipe of Peace Council must have been subject to a very delicate exercise of authority, and which was also often fluctuating in its power, it was finally overthrown by some indiscreet act. The power to light this pacific fire is represented as having been held by a woman, and after its final extinction in the area of western New York, it was equally clear that hereafter it began to flicker. It was finally put out in terrible bloodshed by the increasing and conquering Five Nations. The fate of the Eries has excited deep interest, and they are still brought to mind by the noble lake and its noted outlet the Falls of Niagara, the lake which still bears their once distinguished name.

They possessed twelve large forts, which were similar to the cities of refuge of the children of Israel. The country was noted for its fertility, game of every kind abounded, and fruits of sunny France flourished in the open air. The Eries were regarded as the Pacificators or Peace Councilors of the many tribes and confederacies which waged war so furiously one with another north, south, east and west of them. In the year 1626 they were ruled by Queen Yag-ownea, "Mother of Nations."

She was called "Gegosasa" by the French and Senecas. They spoke a dialect of the old Huron-Iroquois race, in morale and religious belief, that of living under a Theocracy, they also agreed with these Romans of the New world. The Eries occupied geographically a significant position, their territory lay intermediate between all contending parties—red and white—the various Indian confederacies, as well as the rival European powers in the race for supremacy on the continent. They had already from propinquity and from a certain community of habit, and in spite of their supposed perfectly established neutrality between the powers, been drawn into a secret friendship with the Mississagies who dwelt on the west and north of Lake Ontario. Totemic ties of consanguinity, as well as the sacred trust of Kindler of the Peace fires of the continent, should have kept Gegosasa true to her guardianship and faithful to her vows of vir-

ginity, trust and vows, which required greater wisdom than this last Queen of her dynasty possessed.

The first war was caused by an act of perfidy, and from the account given by David Cusick, Yagowanea, was in some respects another Zenobia. But Yagowanea sacrificed an empire of neutrality to the passion of love she entertained towards a Mississaga Chief.

There is a good deal of evidence given among many nations of this continent that the order of Vestal Virgins was a recognized one among the N. A. Indians. This summer, 1899, while visiting Medad, I heard the following tale, scarcely yet has time elapsed to dignify it into tradition :

When the vicinity of Medad was first being searched for relics, some delvers in their diggings on a knoll overlooking the weird waters and their surroundings, came across a solitary grave which held the skeleton of a woman—what was left of her mouldering cerements and the crumbling bones exposed to the open air were all that remained of a woman of rank. By what token, or by whom first whispered it is not known, but 'tis said, "through loss of her virtue, this woman was buried in a lonely grave, her remains not being thought worthy of burial in the communion 'pit,' of family, tribe or race."

According to Horatio Hale, "It is likely that the Eries separated from the parent stock earlier than the Iroquois, and that they were thus enabled for a time to avoid becoming embroiled in the quarrel between the two great divisions of the race." Of this we are certain, that they were the first to turn their steps southward, cross the Canawaga (St. Lawrence), then turn their faces westward, and follow the setting sun, finally settling down in the rich fields and fruit lands of the central peninsula of Canaiderada, the country of "big lakes and rivers" Father de La Roche, a Recollect, passed the winter of 1626 with the Neutre, Erigh or Cat nations—the first Frenchman who came in contact with the important neutral confederacy occupying the present Niagara escarpment. Most of the villages were on the west side of the Niagara river, their country being the ordinary, neutral passage way between the Iroquois and the Hurons—sworn enemies. On all early maps the Erie cities of refuge, situated on Lakes Erie or Ontario, were at some distance from both lake and river, they were found some miles away from the

water in order that they might not be surprised from sudden attack.

Father de La Roche, in his first attempt to Christianize the Indians, notes the peculiarity which distinguished the Eries from all the other nations of America—the astounding peculiarity of neutrality between fierce and ever contending nations. They spoke a dialect of Iroquois in the western, and in the northern cantons the dialect was of the Huron type, while on the banks of the Niagara a very close relationship existed with the Seneca speech.

This is the only confederacy which we read of in America, which was governed by a woman. According to David Cusick in his history of the Five Nations, first published in 1825, the final destruction of the Eries was caused by an act of perfidy. The wampum and peace pipe of the Mother of Nations were held sacred; all who sought the shelter of her lodge were considered safe from their pursuers until such time as the question in dispute should be discussed by representative chiefs from the nations representing the litigants, the Queen, through virtue of her office, rendering judgment on the case, a verdict from which there was no appeal.

The central point of her authority was a place called Kieuka, on the Niagara ridge and not very far from the present village of Tuscarora. Protected by the sanctity of her office, a reputation which seems to give evidence of the truth of the assertion which has been made that the order of *Vestal Virgins was a recognized one among the N. A. Indians, she had a council house and a contiguous building, where she received messengers and ambassadors from the Five Nations, the Wyandot (Huron), Mississagies and others. Her lands extended to the foot of Lake Erie and along the head of Lake Ontario. Near the "head of the lake" (Ontario), an outrage occurred, which she caused summarily to be punished and which led to the fatal breach of neutrality. The Seneca warriors had been received and had begun to smoke the pipe of peace when a deputation of Mississagies were announced. These latter informed the queen that the two men before her had just returned from assassinat-

*NOTE.—This is a tradition corroborated by the fact that the Indians still show some medicinal plants which they say are very salutary, but which have no virtue unless administered by Virgin hands.

ing their noted chief, the queen's lover. They demanded the right of blood and this demand was instantly granted, though in violation of the sanctity of her lodge as a place of refuge. The Senecas were put to horrible death by the Mississagies. Intelligence of this breach of procedure in the queen's office spread in every direction. The Iroquois, the aggrieved party, flew to arms. The Queen, when her frenzy of grief had time to calm, realized what in her temporary oblivion of all around her she had jeopardised for herself and people—she knew what awaited her at the hands of the Iroquois—but the warlike instincts of her forefathers rose to the occasion. She at once despatched messengers to Onondaga to explain her position and to modern Buffalo, her chief garrisoned city. She also appealed to the War-an-ak-arana (Andastes), who were encamped then on the banks of Lake Erie to come to her assistance. She went herself to Buffalo and at the head of a very large force of warriors proceeded rapidly towards the Genesee river where the first engagement took place. She was met by fifteen hundred Senecas under Shorikowana, a most noted Seneca warrior. The two parties met about midway between Canandaigua lake and the Genesee river, and near the outlet of two small lakes, near the foot of one called Hon-ey-oye the battle was fought.

When the two parties came in sight of each other, the outlet of the lake only intervened between them. The entire force of the Iroquois was not in view of the Eries. The reserve corps of one thousand young men had not been allowed to advance in view of the foe. At sight of their opposing force on the opposite side of the stream, the Eries impetuously rushed through the water and fell on the enemy with tremendous fury.

Notwithstanding the undaunted courage and bravery of the Iroquois they could not withstand such a terrible onslaught, they were compelled to yield the ground on the bank of the stream. The whole force of the Iroquois, except the corps of reserve, now became engaged; they fought hand to hand and foot to foot; the battle raged horribly, no quarter was asked or given on either side. As the fight thickened and became more and more desperate, the Eries for the first time became sensible of their true position. What they had long feared had become a fearful reality. *Their enemies had combined together for their destruction*, and they now found themselves

engaged suddenly and unexpectedly in a fearful struggle, which involved not only their high prestige as arbitrators of America, and also as the glorious custodians of the National Pipe of Peace, but the fate of their national existence now hung on the issues of the day. They were intensely proud, the word of their Queen, "Mother of Nations," had from immemorial time been unquestioned law—a power felt and a superiority acknowledged by all the surrounding tribes. All these considerations flashed upon the minds of the bold Eries, and nerved every arm with almost supernatural strength and power.

On the other hand, the united forces of the once weaker tribes, but seventy years joined together as a league and confederacy by Hiawatha, and made strong in their union, fired by a spirit of emulation and excited to the highest pitch among the warriors of the different tribes brought for the first time to act in concert; inspired with zeal and confidence by the counsels of the wisest chiefs, and led on by the most experienced warriors of all the united tribes, the five nations were invincible. Though staggered at the first desperate onslaught of the Eries, the Iroquois soon rallied and made a stand, and now the din of battle rises higher and higher; the war club, the tomahawk and the scalping knife, wielded by herculean arms, do terrible deeds of battle and death. During the hottest of the conflict, which was fierce and long, the corps of reserve, amounting to one thousand young men, were, by a skilful movement under their experienced chief and leader, placed in rear of the Eries on the opposite side of the stream in ambush. The Eries had been driven seven times across the stream and as often regained their ground, but the eighth time at a given signal from their leader, the corps of reserve in ambush rushed upon the almost exhausted Eries with a tremendous yell.

Shorikowana, the Seneca war chief, was fortunately for the Eries killed by an arrow, when Gegosasa proposed terms of peace, which were accepted, and the remnant of her warriors bearing with them their wounded and as many of the dead bodies of their leaders as they could find returned to Buffalo. This first war ended in 1634. Upon her return home Gegosasa found internal affairs in a terrible condition. The campaign from which she had just returned proved in the long run the destruction of the neutral Confederacy. Prophets

and Seers in this crucial hour foretold the downfall of Indian supremacy on the continent, dreams were dreamt, visions were seen, woe and the crying of women filled the land, for now the glory and prominence given to the women of old Canada was lost forever, henceforth woman would be degraded and in her humiliation walk with downcast eyes and in humbleness of spirit until the hour of her redemption sounded.

Distracted by these prophecies and their implied reproaches on her conduct, self accusations swiftly followed in their train. The stings of an aroused conscience now rent her soul. Where once quarrels and disputes had been settled by peaceful council and arbitration, feuds and seditions ruled, her reign as arbitrator was ended, her influence and claims to be regarded as the judge of her people's rights and wrongs were openly jered at and derided, her wishes once law were set at naught and disregarded.

"Were these really truths which were daily being hurled at her "as she endeavored to resume her old home life?"

"Had she indeed been the first to set the law of antiquity at defiance? Was it not owing to her failure in preserving the laws governing totemic, joined to the violation of her vows of virginity, "that had brought on such disastrous results?"

These and similar questions tortured her soul with the spirit of despair, but at last her courageous spirit whispered hope, "All is not lost," and she vowed yet again that if repentance and atonement could wipe out her bitter shame that on her part should be done. She determined to make a last appeal to the neutre nations to rally to her standard, beacon fires were lit, and her runners sent forth to summon a grand council. She there confessed her sorrow and bitter repentance and appealed to the noted chivalrous spirit of her audience for volunteers to aid her in recuperating their losses. Accompanied by her vestals, noted women, counsellors and the chief warriors who still remained loyal to her, she retired to Buffalo. The flower of the nation left her after the first war, those still faithful and believing with their dethroned Queen that "all was not lost" for them, numbered fifteen hundred warriors, these left the disaffected in possession of the central and western towns of the peninsula and gathered themselves around their Queen at Teosah-wa (Buffalo).

The Secessionists were composed of bands of young warriors

under no united leadership, each clan, under its own elected chief, strove for the mastery over the others in hopes of winning ultimate supremacy.

Adventurous hunters and builders of canoes joined their ranks. The flint arrow makers had followed the queen. Physically both parties of the divided Neutre Nations were the finest body of men on the continent.

This faction having thrown to the winds the most sacred traditions of their fore fathers now gave free indulgence to their worst passions. As though the act of their queen failure and loss of prestige had fallen upon them, the sex which had thitherto been so venerated and chivalrously held in their estimation and conduct, should thereafter be degraded and made to suffer. As a nation they had lost standing and rule among nations through the weakness of a woman ; the law regarding restitution governing their national procedure should now, proportionately, be put into effect regarding women. In the tribal communal respect and veneration ~~was~~ paid to women among all North American Indians, in respect to prisoners who were torture to death women were not to be subjected to the agonies of fire. This law was now broken. The revolted Neutrals not only caused female captives taken in their raids but also of their own women whom they knew or suspected ~~undergo~~ still sympathized with Gegosasa to the atrocious torture of fire, but delighted with fiendish revelry in their suffering death cries.

The richness and fertility of their soil—the abundance of vegetables, fruit and game to be found without almost any exertion—left the duty of providing entirely to the women, now that the men felt free from any tribal or national obligations to lead respectable lives, they gave themselves up to the enjoyment of every animal instinct. Luxury and self-indulgence has ruined more than one nation which, unchecked by moral law, rendered no homage to, or destroyed the spiritual nature of woman.

Decadence rapidly followed this new mode of life.

A generation of sloth, gluttony and licentiousness of the most depraved character, with now and again as a bloody pastime, rousing themselves to perpetrate cowardly and ferocious raids against weaker tribes of the Algonkin race living to the west of them, brought on swift retribution.

The Mascoutins or ' Fire Nations," the people who worked the ancient copper mines of Lake Superior, dwelt on the west side of the river Detroit. It was on these people that the Neutral Secessionists, aided by the Ottawas now warred. (June, 1642). At the head of the largest combined force of warriors they could muster, they marched against the Fire or little prairie people. They attacked a fortified fort, garrisoned by nine hundred warriors, who bravely sustained the attack, but after a siege of nine days the Mascoutins were forced to surrender. A large number were killed during the siege, four hundred were taken prisoners, four hundred women and children shared the same fate, and after having tortured the prisoners, burned the women, gouged the eyes and girdled the lips of the old men of the country, they abandoned their unfortunate victims in their helpless misery to a tragic existence and death.

When the Iroquois heard of these atrocities they met to the number of 1500 men, crossed Gegosasa's diminished territory and in rapid succession, entered village after village of the Secessionists. The greatest consternation ensued, villages were abandoned and the inmates pursued by the conquering Romans of the new world. After being hotly pressed and pursued by the Iroquois, over 2000 warriors, besides women and children were destroyed. Famine and plague destroyed this remnant of the Neutral Nation. The central and western country was devastated.

The Iroquois returned home, taking with them prisoners reserved for adoption or fire.

Meanwhile at Buffalo, Gegosasa still held sway as Queen of the Eries. The Kaw Kaws, the largest tribe of her old Confederation, remained loyal to her. Their lands stretched from eighteen mile creek (Jordan), along the north shore of Lake Ontario. Near the "head of the lake" on the north-west of Burlington Bay, was stationed their village of Medad, built on the hill overlooking the small lake of the same name.

The ruins of this village visited by the early explorers and Jesuit Fathers, are still to be seen surrounded by much of their primitive beauty and natural loveliness. The spell of nature overshadowing the weird surroundings is cast in a minor key; the basin or crater of some long extinct volcano whose formation justifies the belief, forms the small, but ancient lake. The basin is placed away up on the

hills, behind the valley of the bay, and by hard measurement, bottom is not struck until a depth of nearly eighty feet. All around the lake basin is a marsh or bog land, so soft in places that in spring time a pole may be thrust down into it to almost any depth. Lake Medad and its immediate vicinity was in a past age of the world's history one of the great gathering places for Indian peoples of Ontario, they loved the spot, and not only loved and lived, but buried their dead there.

At the first council which the queen held after the Genese engagement, the Eries decided to employ their time of truce in training their youth in every possible warlike exercise, in order to make themselves ready when the opportunity offered to retrieve their lost position with the Iroquois. Still confident in their superiority over any one of the tribes inhabiting countries within the bounds of their knowledge, they trusted in what they believed to be their own inherent greatness, to re-assert themselves eventually with the Five Nations. No protest was therefore made when deputies sent from Onondaga requested "right of way" over her possessions when the Iroquois set out to revenge the Mascoutin butcheries. Gegosasa still nursed her projects for the future, and present peace must be had at all hazards. There also remained little doubt in her mind of the results of an encounter between the warriors of the Great League of United Households, and her own undisciplined, debased old Covenanters, better far that those who had once called her "mother," should meet their deserved punishment from the flail of the Iroquois, than that she should be forced to enter into a matricidal war.

The overwhelming success of the Iroquois Campaign, taught the Eries that this new confederation of tribes, any one of which might be almost an equal match for her people and of whose personal prowess they had witnessed on the Chinisseo, a prowess and fame heightened by the masterful manner in which the rebellious Neutrals had been swept out of existence, inspired Gegosasa, her councillors and warriors with most anxious forebodings. To cope collectively with them, seemed to be now an impossible feat. The only hope of the Eries therefore, lay in being able, by a series of subtle strategic surprises, to destroy the Five Nations in detail.

It was the year of 1655, that the Eries sent a friendly message

to the Senecas, who were their nearest neighbors, inviting them to select one hundred of their most noted athletes to play a game of ball against the same number to be selected by the Eries, for a wager that should be considered worthy the occasion and the character of the nation, in whose behalf the offer had been made. Now hitherto, the Eries had been the acknowledged champion athletes of the continent; in all hand and foot struggles they were unequalled.

The message was received and entertained in the most respectful manner. A council of the Five Nations was called and the proposition fully discussed, and a messenger dispatched with the decision of the council respectfully declining the challenge.

This emboldened the Eries, and the next year the offer was renewed, and after being again considered, again formally declined.

This was far from satisfying the proud lords of "The Great Lake," and the challenge was renewed the third time. The blood of the young Iroquois could not be restrained. They importuned the old men to allow them to accept the challenge, and the wise councils which had so far prevailed at last gave way, and the challenge was accepted.

Nothing could exceed the enthusiasm with which each tribe sent forward its chosen champions for the contest. The only difficulty seemed to be to make a selection where all were so worthy. After much delay, one hundred of the flower of all the Five Nations were fixed. An experienced chief was chosen as the leader of the party, whose orders the young men were strictly enjoined to obey. A grand council was held at Onondaga, and in the presence of the assembled multitude, the party was charged in the most solemn manner, to observe a pacific course of conduct towards their competitors and the nation whose guests they were about to become, and to allow no provocation, however great, to be resented by any act of aggression on their part, but in all respects to acquit themselves in a manner worthy the representatives of a great and powerful people, anxious to cultivate peace and friendship with their neighbors according to the teachings of Hiawatha. The party then took up its line of march for Teosahwa. When the chosen band had arrived in the vicinity of the point of their destination, a messenger was sent forward to notify the Eries of their arrival, and the next day was to be set apart for their grand entree. The elegant and athletic forms, the tasteful

yet not cumbrous dress, the dignified, noble bearing of their chief, and more than all, the modest demeanor of the young warriors of the Iroquois party, won the admiration of all beholders. They brought no arms. Each one bore a bat, used to throw or strike the ball, tastefully ornamented, being a hickory stick about five feet long, bent over at the end, and a thong netting woven into the bow.

After a day of refreshment, all things were ready for the contest. The chief of the Iroquois brought forward and deposited upon the ground, a large pile of costly belts of wampum, beautifully ornamented moccasins, rich beaver robes, and other articles of great value in the eyes of the Indians, as the stake and wager on the part of his people. These were carefully matched, article by article, by the chief of the Eries—were won by the Iroquois, who bore off their prize in triumph. Thus ended the day.

The Iroquois having now accomplished the object of their visit, proposed to take their leave, but the chief of the Eries addressing himself to the leader, said, their young men though fairly beaten in the game of ball, would not be satisfied unless they could have a foot race, and proposed to match ten of their number against an equal number of the Iroquois party, which was assented to, and the Iroquois were again victorious.

The Kaw-Kaws, who resided at twenty mile creek (Jordan) being present as friends of the Eries and umpires of the games, invited the Iroquois to visit them before they returned home, and thither the whole company repaired. The chief of the Eries evidently dissatisfied with the result of the several contests already decided, as a last and final test of the courage and prowess of his guests, proposed to select twelve men to be matched by the same number to be selected from the Iroquois party to wrestle, and that the victor should despatch his adversary on the spot by braining him with a tomahawk, bearing off his scalp as a trophy. This proposal was not at all agreeable to the Iroquois. They, however, agreed to accept the challenge with the determination—should they again be victorious—not to execute the bloody part of the proposal. The champions were accordingly chosen. A Seneca was the first to step into the ring, and threw his adversary among the ringing shouts of the multitude. He stepped back and declined to execute his victim who lay passive at his feet. As quick as thought, the chief of the Eries seized the tomahawk and

with a single blow scattered the brains of his vanquished warrior over the ground. His body was dragged out of the way and another champion of the Eries presented himself. He was as quickly thrown by his more skilful and powerful antagonist of the Iroquois party, and as quickly despatched by the infuriated chief of the Eries. A third met the same fate. The chief of the Iroquois seeing the terrible excitement which agitated the multitude, gave a signal to retreat. Every man obeyed, and in a moment they were out of sight. In two hours they arrived at Buffalo, gathered up the trophies of their victories and were on their way home.*

The visit of the hundred athletes of the Iroquois and its terrible results, only served to inflame the jealousy of the Eries, and to convince them that they had powerful enemies to contend with. It was no part of their new policy to strengthen their power by cultivating friendly, or rather equal alliance, with any of their neighbors—they struggled to regain their ancient position as Arbitrators of the continent—the “Island”—as warriors, they must prove themselves “superior to all men.” As a league, the Five Nations could not be dealt with, they must be destroyed in detail. With this view, a powerful war party was immediately organized to attack the Senecas. It happened at that time, that there resided among the Eries, a Seneca woman, who during the first war had been taken captive and been married to an Erie, he died and left her a widow without children, a stranger among strangers, and now sadly alone, her heart and thoughts naturally turned with longing towards her old home. Apprehending the terrible note of preparation for a bloody onslaught upon her kindred and friends, she formed the resolution of apprising them of their danger. As soon as night set in she started on her journey, travelled all night, and early next morning reached the “head of the lake,” where she found a canoe fastened to a tree, she boldly jumped in and pushed out into the open lake. Coasting down the south shore of the lake, she arrived at Oswega river in the

*A parallel engagement between “Young Men” is found in sacred history, in 11 Samuel, Chap. 11, Verses 14, 15, 16, beginning “Let the young men now arise and play before us.” “Let them arise.” The place was called hereafter, the “Place of Strong Man.” “The chiefs arose and called out in a loud voice, “Treachery, Treachery.”

night, she was near to the town of Hon-ey-oye. She directed her way to the house of the head chief and gave him her information. She was immediately secreted by the chief, and runners were despatched to all the tribes summoning them to grand council. When they were convened, the chief arose, and in the most solemn manner told the audience that a bird had appeared to him in a vision of the night and that a great war party of the Eries was preparing to make a secret and sudden descent upon them to destroy them, that nothing could save them but an immediate rally of all the warriors of the Five Nations to meet the enemy before they had time to strike the meditated blow. These solemn announcements were heard in breathless silence. When the chief sat down, there was one yell of menacing madness and the earth fairly shook when the mass of frenzied Iroquois stamped the ground with fury, and brandishing high in the war clubs, demanded to be led against the invaders. No time was to be lost, delay might prove fatal. A body of five thousand warriors was formed, with a corps of reserve of one thousand young men who had never seen battle. The bravest chiefs from all the tribes were put in command, spies sent out in search of the enemy, the whole body taking up a line of march in the direction from whence they expected an attack. Meanwhile, Erie scouts brought word to Buffalo of the approach of an armed force. Gegosasa with over two thousand warriors besides women and children, took refuge within the palisaded fort or fortifications. This fortress at present Buffalo, stood on a fine plain, and was surrounded by a high wall, formed of huge trunks of trees driven into the ground side by side, and wedged together. These were crossed within and without by smaller and longer pieces bound to them by bands made of split trees and wild vines. The whole was plastered with a kind of mortar, made of clay and straw stamped together, which filled every chink and crevice in the woodwork, so that it appeared as if smoothed with a trowel. Throughout its whole surface, the wall was pierced at the height of a man with loopholes, whence arrows might be discharged at any enemy, and at every fifty paces it was surmounted by a tower, capable of holding seven or eight fighting men. Whole villages were built of reeds and straw. These forts were built in quadrangle form and palisaded. The four sides were each four hundred paces in length, from side to side, two other palisades divided it into separate

parts. As the Iroquois approached Te-osah-wa, two of the best chiefs disguised themselves in French military costume, to frighten the Eries, and lead them to believe that the wonderful pale faces were with them. These advancing within hearing distance of the fort advised the Eries to surrender. "The MASTER OF LIFE fights for us," said one of the disguised chiefs. "Who is this Master of Life of whom you speak?" replied Gegosasa. "We know of no Master save our right arms and our hatchets." The assault commenced, the palisades were attacked on all sides, the Iroquois using every exertion to carry the Fort by storm without success, their warriors being killed as fast as they approached. At length they resorted to stratagem, they converted their canoes into shields, and advancing under the protection thus afforded, they succeeded in reaching the foot of the entrenchment, using the canoes for ladders, they climbed the palisades in face of the enemy, who, having exhausted their munitions, stood at last within their own fortifications "at bay" before the foe. Gegosasa, and one thousand of her warriors disdain ing to fly, and to afford, by a temporary resistance, time for as many as possible of her people to escape, now engaged in a terrible hand to hand and foot to foot engagement, the canoes gave passage way for continual reinforcements of the Iroquois.

Intimidated by the boldness of the invaders, hundreds of the Eries fled. Gegosasa and her women were secretly led from the fort, guarded by the Queen's body guard. An indiscriminate slaughter of men, fleeing women and children now took place. The blood of the victims ran as water. The vanquished Queen and a remnant of three hundred fugitive Eries collected together and recruited their energies, they retraced their steps in hopes of surprising the enemy on his way home from the pursuit of their fleeing brethren. The plan was well conceived, but failed in execution, Gegosasa and her noble "three hundred" were surrounded, taken prisoners and led captives to Onondaga, the Queen to await trial for her act of betrayal of the Sacred Trust, as custodian of the National Pipe of Peace. Her judges were chosen representatives from the Nations which at one time had ceased war at her command, and whose ambassadors had at her Council House at Kieuka, on the Niagara ridge, yielded their wills to the utterances of a "Mother of Nations." The council fires of the Iroquois Confederacy accepted the judgment of the Onon-

dagas, the senate of the Nations, which was, that the Erie Confederacy should be wiped out of remembrance, and their name obliterated from the number of the tribes of the Huron-Iroquois race. The memory of such a dynasty as that of Yagowanea, "Mother of Nations" was to be buried fathoms deep in the waters bearing their name, the Sacred Lodge of Gegosasa demolished and the Order of Vestal Virgins dispersed, the towns of Refuge covered up or reduced to ashes. The confederacy of Neutrality, instituted in the days of "Antiquity" by the ceremonial of the Pipe of Peace, was left with no monument to carry their name save the name of the waters of Erie. The embarrassments of the wounded and so many captives had detained the Iroquois nearly two months in the country of the Neutrals. The Niagara Peninsula hereafter was annexed as "Hunting Grounds" to the territory of the Iroquois. The rapids of Niagara which for ages have rushed through forest walls and rocky flats, haunted by the rattle-snake, are still hurrying with impetuous speed over rough and stony bed to yield their quota of "smoke" to the ever rising heavenward incense of Niagara "in memoriam" of the broken covenant of the "peace and good will towards men," which once ruled over the Council fires of Central Canaiderada.

The legend is told among the Chippawa tribe, that before Nature sleeps, she clothes herself in royal robes of purple, scarlet and gold in all the glorious mystery of the Indian summer. At that season (October) the Chippawa came to Niagara to make their annual sacrifice to "The Spirit," which dwelt behind the rocks. They chose a victim from the loveliest of their Vestals—the one chosen by lot was sent forth in a newly made white birch canoe, clothed in a tunic of swans skins, over which fell as a mantle the glory of a woman, her long hair, ornamented with wreaths of flowers, around her neck were hung strings of white Wampum—the sign manual of her people that this particular maiden was the victim chosen by the tribe. From the Chippawa shore she was sped forth on the seething rapids above the Falls, an offering to the Mighty Being, who also would draw to himself over the cataract, twelve for the one withheld, before as many moons should wax and wane. One autumn, the lot of sacrifice fell upon an aged sachem's only child, the sole comfort of his old age. He opened not his mouth, and was dumb under the doom of the choice, but to live without her he could not. When she was far out

on the seething treacherous waters, the canoe of the unhappy father
shot like an arrow from the bank to join with his child in death.
Thus father and daughter met again at the moment the terrible
"smoking" caldron below arched over with innumerable irrides
cent rainbows claimed the double sacrifice.

"Ye say they all have passed away,
That noble race and brave,
That their light canoes have vanished
From off the crested wave.
That 'mid the forest where they roved,
There rings no hunter's song shout,
But their name is on our waters,
And ye cannot wash it out."