

HISTORY

OF THE

OTTAWA AND CHIPPEWA INDIANS

OF MICHIGAN;

A GRAMMAR OF THEIR LANGUAGE,

AND PERSONAL AND FAMILY HISTORY OF THE AUTHOR,

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weapons he caused the fish such pain that he ran on the shore and died. After which, Ne-naw-bo-zhoo came out like the Prophet Jonah, and he went home and sat down to smoke his pipe, perfectly satisfied that he had saved many people by disposing of this great fish.

These are some of the legends told among the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, as related in their own language, which are in some things quite similar to the records of the Bible.

CHAPTER X.

Traditions of the Ottawas Regarding Their Early History—Their Wars and Their Confederations With Other Tribes of Indians.

Very many centuries ago, before the discovery of the American continent by the white people, the traditions of the Ottawas say they lived along the banks of one of the largest tributaries of the St. Lawrence, now known as the Ottawa river. The Ottawas spread over the country around the head waters of this stream, subduing all other tribes of Indians which they happened to encounter, except the Chippewas and Stockbridge Indians. They have been always friendly and closely related with these tribes, and consequently no war-club was ever raised by either of these against the other. Their language is of the same root, as they could quite intelligently understand each other. Their manners and customs in every way correspond. Their legends, particularly respecting the flood, and their belief in the Supreme Being, the great creator of all things—Ketchi-mat-ne-do—is very much the same; also their belief in the evil spirit, whose habitation was under the earth. To this deity they offered sacrifices as well as to the other gods or deities. These offerings were called in those days peace-offerings and down-offerings. They never sacrificed flesh of animals to the evil spirit. Their offering to this deity was parched corn pounded, then cooked into hominy; this was sacrificed to the evil spirit, not because they loved him, but to appease his wrath.

Although the Chippewas speak almost the same language as the Ottawas and Stockbridge Indians, yet they seem to belong to another family of Indians, as they are much taller than the Ottawas and Stockbridges, and broader across the shoulders—having a full chest, very erect and striding firmly in their walking. They were much more numerous than the Ottawa Indians. They extended

from lower Canada north-westward up to Manitoba county. There are three kinds of Chippewas, each kind having a different dialect. The Chippewas in Canada, around the Straits of Mackinaw, the islands in Lake Michigan, Sault Ste. Marie, and west of Lake Superior, are much more enlightened and intelligent, and these, we called common Chippewas; but those on the plains further north or northwest of Lake Superior, "the wild Chippewas," and those on the north side of Lake Superior going toward Hudson Bay, we called "the Backwoodsmen." This latter race lived entirely by hunting and fishing and endured very great hardships sometimes, particularly, when there was scarcity of game. The Chippewas were very brave people on the war path, and their principal foes were Sioux Indians on the plains. These were called in the Ottawa language "Naw-do-wa-see," and in the Chippewa "Au-bwan." The plurals are "Naw-do-wa-see-wog" and "Au-bwan-og." The "Naw-do-wa-see-wog" are deadly enemies of the Ottawas and Chippewas, and they are the most careless of their lives, for they taught their children from infancy not to fear death. But the Ottawas were, however, considered as the most ancient tribe of Indians and were called by the other tribe "their big brother." Although they are a smaller race, in stature, then many other tribes, they were known as the most wise and sagacious people. Every tribe belonging to all the Algonquin family of Indians looked up to the Ottawas for good counsel; and they were as brave as the Chippewas and very expert on the warpath.

Every tribe of Indians has a different coat of arms, or symbolic sign by which they are known to one another. The emblem of the Ottawas is a moose; of the Chippewas, a sea gull; of the Backwoodsmen, a rabbit; that of the underground tribe, to which I belong, is a species of hawk; and that of the Seneca tribe of Indians is a crotch of a tree. The Ottawa Indians are very nearly extinct in the state of Michigan as there are only two or three families in the state, whose national emblem is a moose, showing them to be descended from pure Ottawa blood; but those who represent

ed themselves as the Ottawas in this state are descendants from various tribes of Indians, even some are Senecas, of the Iroquois family—formerly deadly enemies of the Ottawas. The cause of this mixture is by intermarriage, and by prisoners of war in former times.

The first man who signed the treaty of 1836, one of the Chippewas of the Grand River Indians, whose name was "Mixinene," was a descendant of the Backwoodsmen, whose emblem was a rabbit. Therefore, all the rest of those Chippewas who went to Washington to form a treaty with the Government felt displeased about this matter and tried to ignore the signature of Mixinene, because they thought that the first signature should have been made by a pure Ottawa or a pure Chippewa, because they had the first right to the land of Michigan. But the "Backwoodsmen," they considered, had no claim nor title to this land which they ceded to the Government of the United States. But the Government did not know the difference, however,—all she wanted was the land. So all the Chiefs of the Ottawas and Chippewas signed this said treaty, not with free will, but by compulsion.

The tradition gives no reason why the Ottawas continually moved towards the northwest at this early period; but it is, however, supposed that it was on account of their deadly enemies, the Iroquois of New York, as they were continually at war with the six nations of Indians. Quite often, the Iroquois would attack them, but the tradition says that in almost every battle the Ottawas would come out victorious over the Iroquois. The Ottawas too, in retaliation, would go to the Iroquois country to scalp some of the Iroquois; then have their jubilees over these scalps by feasting and dancing around them. At this stage of their existence they were an exceedingly fierce and warlike people, not only contending with these tribes, but also with many others out west and south, even to the Chocktaw and Cherokee country and to the Flatheads, Sioux Indians and the Underground race of people out west.

As the Ottawas continued moving up on this beautiful stream