

among the other North American aborigines. They are the only primitive nation on the North American continent that has ever developed a definite and lasting form of Government. Hence, they are extremely proud of their council. If you ask an Iroquois Indian about his Council, he will invariably assume a grave countenance and in his choicest English tell you that the Parliament in London was modelled after his Council of Chiefs.

During my stay among the Indians I was repeatedly urged by my interpreters and informants not to miss an opportunity of witnessing a meeting of this Council. Being curious myself, and unwilling to offend my Indian friends, who in their affection towards me went so far as to grant me the highest honor that an Iroquois can bestow upon a white man, namely that of an honorary chieftanship,¹ I solemnly promised to attend a Council meeting as soon as possible. And an opportunity presented itself very soon. On the day of the meeting my host, a chief and high-priest of the Seneca tribe, and myself drove in a carriage to Oskweken, the principal village of the Reservation and the seat of the Council. On our way we were joined by other chiefs and sub-chiefs, and by the time we arrived at the Council-house, there were about twenty-five of us. The Council is a simple but large structure of bricks consisting of a capacious room, where the Council meets, and of a smaller chamber which serves as a meeting place for the different sub-committees. On entering the Assembly-hall I found most of the chiefs, attired in their primitive garments, and seated in their assigned places, waiting for the arrival of the local Superintendent of Indian affairs. This gave me an opportunity to look around. I was most forcibly struck by the grave and serious attitude of these chiefs. They were sitting there quietly, motionless, without the least inclination to start a conversation among themselves. Each chief seemed to have been wrapped up in his own thoughts, and I could not help thinking that such must have been the aspect of the famous assembly of Senators in the streets of Rome, at the time when the savage Gauls forced their way into the "Eternal City."

The Assembly-Hall presented a very picturesque view. The rear, consisting of a high platform, was occupied by a large table, reserved, as my interpreter informed me, for the Superintendent, the clerk and the official interpreter. The Superintendent takes no part whatsoever in the discussion. He merely transmits communications from the Canadian Government to the Council and receives from the Council messages to the Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa. To the right of the Hall were seated some twenty-five chiefs, representing the Tuscarora and

¹ This ceremony, held in connection with the Strawberry Festival, lasted a whole day, at the conclusion of which the name, Dabenska ("Valuable River"), was bestowed upon me.