

Oneida tribes. These two tribes form the "Confederacy of the Little Brothers," and they are the first ones to take up for discussion any matter brought before the Council. In their midst I observed an elevated seat, towering above the others, and occupied by a gray-haired, long-bearded Indian. This was the high-chief and "Speaker" of the two tribes. On the opposite side of the room there were seated forty-four chiefs, representing the Seneca, Mohawk and Cayuga tribes, and among them their head-chief or "Speaker". The middle part of the Assembly-Hall was occupied by the fifteen chiefs of the Onondagans or "Fire-Keepers" whose head-chief was at the same time the "Speaker" of the House. To the front there were a number of benches reserved for such warriors as cared to attend the meetings and for the parties interested directly in the discussions. Thus, it will be seen, that the Council, while apparently an integral unit, actually consists of three separate assemblies, who discuss and pass upon matters quite independently of one another. A particular question that happens to be brought before the House is first taken up by the "Little Brothers." Each chief belonging to this Confederacy expresses his view and as soon as an agreement is reached, it is announced by the "Speaker" in a loud, sonorous voice. The same question is then taken up by the Mohawks, Seneca and Cayugas, known as the "General House," and their decision announced in the same manner as in the case of the "Little Brothers." The "Fire-Keepers" express their opinion only in cases when the two other sides of the Council cannot agree. Their decision is then final and becomes a law.

No sooner had my informant finished the above description of the procedure of the Council, when the Superintendent appeared, followed by the Clerk and Interpreter. Amidst a general silence the Head-chief of the "Fire-Keepers" arose, and in his melodious, native tongue opened the meeting with a formal prayer, in which he called down the blessings of the Great Spirit upon the "Superintendent, chiefs, warriors, peoples, women and children of the Iroquois Nation." The Superintendent then read a few communications from his Government to the Iroquois Nation, which were, of course, translated by the interpreter into the native tongue of the Indians. After this the real meeting of the Council began. The interest evinced by the chiefs towards each question that came up was remarkable. The debates of the three mentioned groups within the Assembly were keenly followed by those chiefs who had to wait for their turn to speak. And the eloquence which these primitive orators developed, was simply astonishing. Our ideas about an Indian's taciturnity are entirely erroneous, being based upon the fact that in his intercourse with the white man, the Redskin shows a tendency to be reserved. But let the Indian come among his own people, and