

CHAPTER II.

European Discoveries and Explorations — The French in Canada — The Puritans in New England — The Dutch in New York — Advance in Civilization toward the Central Mohawk Valley — Champlain Invades the Territory of the Mohawks — The First Battle — Dutch Troubles with Indians — Grant of the Province of New York — Conquest and Overthrow of the Dutch in the New Netherlands.

JUST four hundred years ago the first Spanish adventurers landed on the shores of the American continent. Sailing under the patronage of Spain, Christopher Columbus, the daring Genoese, in 1492, made his wonderful discoveries. This event has generally been designated as the discovery of America, but it is evident that the first Europeans to visit the western hemisphere were Scandinavians, who colonized Iceland in A. D. 875, Greenland in 983, and about the year 1000 had cruised southward as far as the Massachusetts coast.

During the ages that preceded these events, no grander country in every point of view ever awaited the approach of civilization. With climate and soil diversified between the most remote extremes; with thousands of miles of ocean shore, indented by magnificent harbors to welcome the world's commerce; with many of the largest rivers of the globe draining its territory and forming natural highways for commerce; with a system of lakes so immense in area as to entitle them to the name of inland seas; with mountains, hills and valleys laden with the richest minerals and almost exhaustless fuel; and with scenery unsurpassed for grandeur, it needed only the Caucasian to transform a wilderness inhabited by savages into the free, enlightened republic, which is to-day the wonder and glory of the civilized world.

Following close upon the discoveries of Columbus and other earlier explorers, various foreign powers fitted out fleets and commissioned navigators to establish colonies in the vast but unknown continent. It is not within the scope of the present work to detail the results accomplished by those bold navigators, and yet they naturally led to others of greater importance, eventually rendering the great Mohawk valley the

battlefield of various contending powers, each striving for supremacy and dominion over a territory of which Montgomery county is an important integral part. These events, however, will be but briefly mentioned, and only those will be detailed which had a direct bearing upon our subject.

In 1508, Aubert discovered the St. Lawrence river; and in 1524, Francis I, King of France, sent Jean Verrazzani on a voyage of exploration to the new world. He entered a harbor, supposed to have been that of New York, where he remained fifteen days; and it is believed that his crew were the first Europeans to land on the soil of what is now the state of New York. The Gallic explorer cruised along the coast in his frail vessels to the extent of about 2,100 miles, sailing as far north as Labrador, and giving to the whole region the name of "New France"—a name by which the French possessions in America were ever known during the dominion of that power. In 1534 the same king sent Jacques Cartier to the new country. He made two voyages and ascended the St. Lawrence as far as Montreal. The next year he again visited the same region with a fleet which brought a number of French nobility, all of whom were filled with high hopes, and bearing the blessings of the church. This party was determined upon the colonization of the country, but, after passing a winter at the Isle of Orleans and suffering much from the rigors of the climate, they abandoned their scheme and returned to France. As a beginning of the long list of needless and shameful betrayals, treacheries and other abuses to which the two confiding natives were subjected, Cartier inveigled into his vessel the Indian chief Donnégana, who had been his generous host, and bore him with several others into hopeless captivity and final death.

The failure of this scheme delayed for several years further action in the same direction, but in 1540 Cartier again visited the scene of his explorations, accompanied by Jean Francis de Roberval, the latter holding a king's commission as lieutenant-general over the "new countries of Canda, Hochelaga and Saguenay." This commission, according to Watson, conferred authority over a vast territory with the plenary powers of vice-royalty. The results of this voyage, however, were no more profitable than its predecessor, and the effect was to discourage further attempts in the same direction until about 1598, when New

France, particularly its Canadian portion, was made a place of banishment for French convicts; but even this plan failed, and it remained for private enterprise, stimulated by the hope of gain, to make the first successful effort toward the permanent occupation of the country.

The real discoverer and founder of a permanent colony in New France was Samuel de Champlain, a man born with that uncontrollable instinct of investigation and desire for knowledge of distant regions which has always so strongly characterized all great explorers. His earlier adventures in this country have no connection with this work, and it is therefore sufficient to merely mention that in 1608, having counseled his patrons that the banks of the St. Lawrence was the most favorable site for a new empire, he was sent to the country and founded Quebec. To satisfy his love for exploration, Champlain united with the Canadian Indians and marched into the unknown country which the latter had described to him. The result was the discovery of the lake that bears his name; the invasion of the lands of the Mohawks in the country of the Iroquois; a conflict between the Algonquins (aided by Champlain) and a portion of the Iroquois confederacy, in which the latter were defeated with the loss of two of their chiefs, who fell by the hands of Champlain himself.

Thus was signalized the first hostile meeting between the white man and the Indian. Low as the latter was found in the scale of intelligence and humanity, and terrible as were many of the subsequent deeds of the Iroquois, it cannot be denied that their early treatment could foster in the savage breast no other feeling than that of bitterest hostility. It seems like a pathetic page of romance to read Champlain's statement that "The Iroquois are greatly astonished, seeing two men killed so instantaneously," one of whom was their chief; while the ingenuous acknowledgment of the Frenchman, "I had put four balls into my arquebus," is a vivid testimony of how little mercy the Iroquois nations were thenceforth to expect from their northern enemies and the pale-faced race which was eventually to drive them from their domain. It was an age, however, in which might was appealed to as right more frequently than in later years, and the planting of the lowly banner of the Cross was frequently preceded by bloody conquests. It is in the light of the prevailing custom in the old world in Champlain's time that we must view his ready hostility to the Indian.

Now let us turn briefly to other events which have had an important bearing on the settlement of this part of the country. A few weeks after the battle between Champlain and the Indians, Henry Hudson, a navigator in the service of the Dutch East India Company, anchored his ship (*The Halfmoon*) at the mouth of the river which now bears his name. This took place September 5, 1609. He met the savages and was hospitably received by them; but before his departure he subjected them to an experimental knowledge of the effects of intoxicating liquor—an experience perhaps more baneful in its results than that inflicted by Champlain with his new and murderous weapon.

Hudson ascended the river to a point within less than a hundred miles of that reached by Champlain, then returned to Europe, and, through information he had gained, he soon after established a Dutch colony, for which a charter was granted in 1614, naming the region "New Netherlands." The same year they built a fort on Manhattan Island, and the next year another, called Fort Orange, on the site of Albany. In 1621 the Dutch West India Company was formed and took possession of "New Amsterdam" and the New Netherlands; and in 1626 the territory was made a province or county of Holland. For fifteen years the Dutch settlers remained at peace with the Indians, but the harsh and unwise administration of the provisional governor, William Kieft, provoked the latter to hostilities, which continued with but little interruption during the remainder of the Dutch dominion.

Meanwhile, in 1607, the English had made their first permanent settlement at Jamestown, Va., and in 1620 planted their historic colony at Plymouth Rock. These two colonies became the successful rivals of all others, in that strife which finally left them masters of the country.

On the discoveries and colonizations thus briefly noted, three great European powers based claims to a part of the territory embraced in the state of New York; first, England, by reason of the discovery of John Cabot, who sailed under commission from Henry VII, and on the 24th of June, 1497, reached the sterile coast of Labrador, also that made in the following year by his son, Sebastian, who explored the same coast from New Foundland to Florida, claiming a territory eleven degrees in width and indefinitely extending westward; second, France, which, from the discoveries of Verrazzani, claimed a portion of the At-

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lantic coast, and also (under the title of New France), an almost boundless region westward ; third, Holland, which based on Hudson's discoveries a claim to the entire country from Cape Cod to the southern shore of Delaware Bay.

The Dutch, however, became the temporary occupants of the region under consideration ; but their domination was of brief duration. Indian hostilities were provoked through the ill-considered action of Governor Kieft, whose official career continued for about ten years, being superseded by Peter Stuyvesant in May, 1647. Stuyvesant was the last of the Dutch governors, and his firm and equitable policy had the effect of harmonizing the discontent existing among the Indians. On the 12th of March, 1664, however, Charles II, of England, granted by letters patent to his brother, James, the Duke of York, all the country from the river St. Croix to the Kennebec in Maine, together with all the land from the west bank of the Connecticut river to the east side of Delaware Bay. The duke sent an English squadron to secure the gift, and on the 8th of September following, Governor Stuyvesant capitulated, being constrained to that course by the Dutch colonists, who preferred peace with the same privileges and liberties accorded to the English colonists, to a prolonged and perhaps fruitless contest. The English changed the name of New Amsterdam to New York, and thus ended the Dutch dominion in America.

The Dutch, during their period of peace with the Iroquois, had become thrifty and prosperous by trading guns and rum to the Indians for furs, thus supplying them with doubly destructive weapons. The peaceful relations existing between the Dutch and the Indians at the time of the English accession were maintained by the latter, but the strife and jealousy between the English and the French continued, the former steadily gaining ground both through their success in forming and maintaining an alliance with the Iroquois and also through the more permanent character of their settlements. It may be added that the final surrender of the Dutch to the English power did not lead to a withdrawal of the former from the territory. It made no great difference to the settlers from Holland whether they were under their own or English jurisdiction, but had their preferences been consulted they would of course have preferred their mother country. Their settle-

ments extended from New Amsterdam (New York) on the south, to Albany on the north, mainly along the Hudson river, but there are well defined evidences of their early occupation of what is now western Vermont, and also part of Massachusetts; and at the same time they also advanced their outposts along the Mohawk valley toward the region of old Tryon county.

CHAPTER III.

The Indian Occupation — The Iroquois Confederacy — The Five and Six Nations of Indians — Location and Names — Character and Power of the League — Social and Domestic Habits — The Mohawks — Treatment of the Jesuit Missionaries — Discouraging Efforts at Civilization — Names of Missionaries — Alliance with the English — Downfall of the Confederacy.

AFTER the establishment of the Dutch in the New Netherlands the region now embraced within the state of New York was held by three powers — one native and two foreign. The main colonies of the French (one of the powers referred to) were in the Canadas, but through the zeal of the Jesuit missionaries their line of possessions had been extended south and west of the St. Lawrence river, and some attempts at colonization had been made, but as yet with only partial success. In the southern and eastern portion of the province granted to the Duke of York were the English, who with steady yet sure advances were pressing settlement and civilization westward and gradually nearing the French possessions. The French and English were at this time, and also for many years afterwards, conflicting powers, each studying for the mastery on both sides of the Atlantic; and with each succeeding outbreak of war in the mother countries, so there were renewed hostilities between their American colonies. Directly between the possessions of the French and the territory of the English lay the lands of the famous Iroquois confederacy, then more commonly known as the Five Nations. By the French they were called the "Iroquois," but by the Dutch they were known as the "Maquas," while the English called them "Mingoes;" but however variously they may have been desig-

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