

west; on the north by Lake St. Sacrement and the River St. Lawrence; by New York partly on the south and partly on the southeast. It is watered by several rivers. The soil varies in different parts, but is, generally speaking, very fertile.

The Mohawk canton is the most northerly of all, and nearest to New York. Those of Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca follow in the order in which I have just named them, going west, inclining a little towards the south, which has given them the name of Upper Cantons; unless it is inferred that they derive their name from being met in that order as you ascend the St. Lawrence and Lake Ontario, which that river traverses. The name Iroquois is purely French, and is formed from the term *Hiro* or *Hero*, which means *I have said*—with which these Indians close all their addresses, as the Latins did of old with their *dixi*—and of *Koué*, which is a cry sometimes of sadness, when it is prolonged, and sometimes of joy, when it is pronounced shorter.¹ Their proper name is Agonnisionni, which means *cabin-makers*,² because they build them much more solid than other Indians.

Through the Mohawk canton, which was at the time of which we are writing the most populous of all, a pretty river meanders agreeably, for seven or eight leagues, between two beautiful prairies.³ That of Onondaga contains a beautiful lake, called *Gannentaha*,⁴ in the vicinity of

¹ Charlevoix, *Journal*, p. 32; *Laftau, Mœurs des Sauvages*, i., p. 32. De Hornn, taking Iroquois to be an Indian name, makes them descend from the Yrcans of Herodotus: *De Origine Gentium*, p. 184.

² Charlevoix here follows Lafitau, *Mœurs des Sauvages*, i., p. 102. The *Relation de la Nouvelle France*, 1654, p. 11, says Hotinonchiendi—that is to say, “the completed cabin.” See also 1660, p. 38. This is a Huron form. Father Bruyas gives the Mohawk form as Hotinonsionni; Col-

den, as Rodinunchsiouni (*History of the Five Nations*, N. Y., 1727, p. 1); Morgan, the Seneca form, Hodenosaunee. The translation, “cabin-makers,” is an error. It is a verbal form, meaning “they make (*i. e.*, constitute) a cabin;” hence the “completed cabin” itself. This is the interpretation of Bruyas, supported by Dr. Wilson, a well-informed modern Iroquois authority.

³ The Cohoes were apparently unknown to Charlevoix.

⁴ Onondaga Lake.

Origin of
their name.