

we may say that between the Atlantic and the Rockies, Hudson Bay and the Gulf of Mexico, there were four Indian languages in vogue, with great varieties of local dialect:

I. The Algonkins were the most numerous, holding the greater portion of the country from the unoccupied "debatable land" of Kentucky northward to Hudson Bay, and from the Atlantic westward to the Mississippi. Among their tribes were the Micmacs of Acadia, the Penobscots of Maine, the Montagnais of the St. Lawrence, the ill-defined tribes of the country round about Lake St. John, and the Ottawas, Chippewas, Mascoutens, Sacs, Foxes, Pottawatomies, and Illinois of the Upper Lakes. These savages were rude in life and manners, were intensely warlike, depended for subsistence chiefly on hunting and fishing, lived in rude wigwams covered with bark, skins, or matted reeds, practised agriculture in a crude fashion, and were less stable in their habitations than the Southern Indians. They have made a larger figure in our history than any other family, because through their lands came the heaviest and most aggressive movement of white population, French or English. Estimates of early Indian populations necessarily differ, in the absence of accurate knowledge; but it is now believed that the number was never so great as was at first estimated by the Jesuit fathers and the earliest English colonists. A careful modern estimate is, that the Algonkins at no time numbered over 90,000 souls, and possibly not over 50,000.

II. In the heart of this Algonkin land was planted the ethnic group called the Iroquois, with its several distinct branches, often at war with each other. The