

*rontas, atiwanens, ondakhienhai*, "big stones, the elders, the stay-at-homes." However, those still hold, as I have said, the first rank as well in [162] the special affairs of the Villages as of the whole Country, who are most highly esteemed and intellectually preëminent. Their relatives are like so many Lieutenants and Councilors.

They reach this degree of honor, partly through succession, partly through election; their children do not usually succeed them, but properly their nephews and grandsons. And the latter do not even come to the succession of these petty Royalties, like the Dauphins of France, or children to the inheritance of their fathers; but only in so far as they have suitable qualifications, and accept the position, and are accepted by the whole Country. Some are found who refuse these honors,—sometimes because they have not aptitude in speaking, or sufficient discretion or patience, sometimes because they like a quiet life; for these positions are servitudes more than anything else. A Captain must always make it a point to be, as it were, in the field; if a Council is held five or six leagues away for the affairs of the Country, Winter or Summer, whatever the weather, he must go. If there is an Assembly in the Village, it is in the Captain's Cabin; if there is anything to be made public, he must do it; and then the small authority he usually has over his subjects is not [163] a powerful attraction to make him accept this position. These Captains do not govern their subjects by means of command and absolute power; they have no force at hand to compel them to their duty. Their government is only civil; they represent only what is to be done for the good of the village, or of the whole