

quainted with their true and real character, even during the comparative short season in which they mingled with them as a nation, than the British and Americans are at this present day, after over a century of intercourse. The French understood their division into clans, and treated each clan according to the order of its ascendancy in the tribe. They conformed also to their system of governmental polity, of which the totemic division formed the principal ingredient. They were circumspect and careful in bestowing medals, flags, and other marks of honor, and appointing chiefs, and these acts were never done unless being first certain of the approbation of the tribe, and it being in accordance with their civil polity. In this important respect the British, and American government especially, have lacked most woefully. The agents and commissioners, and even traders of these two nations, have appointed chiefs indiscriminately or only in conformity with selfish motives and ends, and there is nothing which has conduced so much to disorganize, confuse, and break up the former simple but well-defined civil polity of these people; and were the matter to be fully investigated, it would be found that this almost utter disorganization has been one of the chief stumbling-blocks which has ever been in the way of doing good to the Indian race. This short-sighted system has created nothing but jealousies and heart-burnings among the Ojibways. It has broken the former commanding influence of their hereditary chiefs, and the consequence is, that the tribe is without a head or government, and it has become infinitely difficult to treat with them as a people. No good has resulted from this bad and thoughtless policy even to the governments who have allowed it to be pursued by its agents. On the contrary, they are punished daily by the evil consequences arising from it, for in this is to be found the true and first cause of the complaints which are continually at this day