

ONEIDA - The People of the Stone 1899

The Bishop of the Diocese coming for the occasion. The chiefs
body lay in state for an hour before the service and hundreds of the
tribe came to show their respect for their chieftain. The scene was
beautiful and impressive as the coffin was borne from the church and
carried along the road to the burial ground of the Oneidas, followed
by the Bishop, the Clergy, the Veiled Choir and a long procession of
men, women and children, singing Indian hymns as they went.

The most noted of the Council Chiefs was Daniel Bread, who was
born in the New Year of 1796. This small beginning of bright boy-
hood was destined to win some of the loftiest laurels of his race. His
love of nature revealed to him many truths, and his young spirit was
attuned to all her harmonies. Through his love for all natural ob-
jects he was led to higher thoughts of life and felt within himself a
yearning for a broader vision and wider
action. He keenly watched the Chiefs
in Council and stored each word they
uttered in his retentive mind. At the
age of 18 he was presented at the Coun-
cil House of the Nation, where his re-
markable power of speech won for him
the recognition as a King of orators
among his fellows. By common consent
he was elected a Council Chief, an office
entirely new to the Nation. During this
year he also represented the Nation
at Washington, and by his arguments
and stern eloquence won much regard.



DANIEL BREAD.

This was but the beginning. From then
on until the end of his career in 1872 he
was ever a man of worth and his Nation looked up to him as a leader.
The following speech, made as a Grand Council of Indians held in
1858 before the Government, though of imperfect report and interpreta-
tion, shows the dignity of his clear, simple style:

"Father: What we have long feared has at last come to us. We
have just settled in this country; have hardly laid down the packs
from our shoulders and recovered from the fatigue of our journey
hate, when you wish us again to remove. It is discouraging. It dis-
courages those that have come, and those that are behind. Father:
The white men are powerful, and they are very rich. You can turn the
river of the water; you can dig away the mountain; why then do you
want the little spot that we have. It is but a little time since, and
we possessed the whole country; now you have gained all; but a few

spots. Why will you not permit us to remain? Father: We are thank-
ful for the good example of the white man. They have taught us to
cultivate our lands; we wish to follow that example still; we have
felt the effects of removal. It is like a feather blown about by the
wind; we wish to be like those heavy substances which stay in the
ground. If we are like the feather, we may soon be blown be-
yond the Rocky Mountains. Father: We are in great distress. We
go to our work, and while cutting down the trees, it seems as if a
whip were held over us. Something tells us, 'this is not yours.'
Father: You promise us a good country beyond the Mississippi. We
are satisfied with the soil, and climate where we now are, and besides
how can we live in peace with the natives there? In former years,
they have had war with our people; we killed many of them; blood is
set on the knife. How can we meet them in peace? Father: We have
long shown our good feelings to the white men, by giving them room.
We have given them lands, until they have a greater country than
Great Britain. It is not yet full. Why then will you not suffer us to
remain? The white people in our neighborhood do not disturb us; we
wish to live with them still; we want to remain where we are."

Another interesting figure in the tribe is Chief Cornelius Hill.
It is noticeable how the Indians select and train up their chiefs.



CORNELIUS HILL.

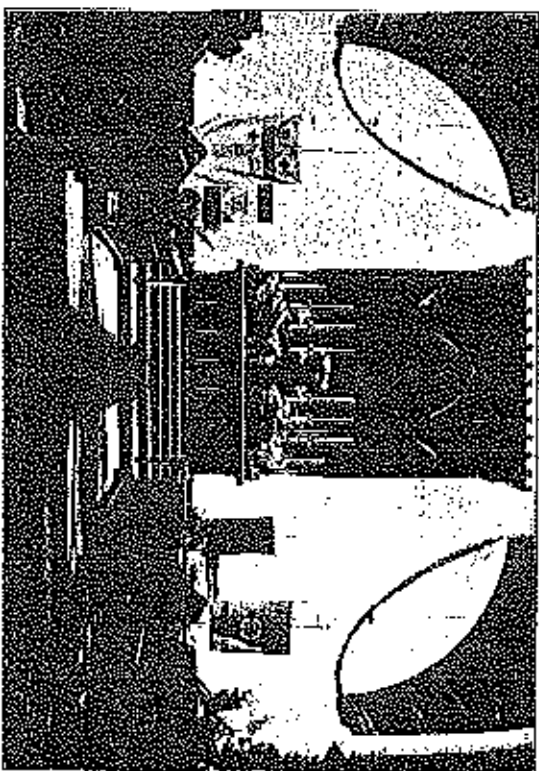
It was while at school at Nashotah that
Cornelius Hill was made a chief of the
Bear Clan when only thirteen years of
age. Upon his return to the Reservation
a national feast was given in his honor to
which all the other clans were present.
The new chief was given the name and
took the place of one of their oldest chiefs
known as Great Medicine. He was the
youngest and consequently is the last
chief of the Oneidas. When about 18 years
of age he began to go with the chiefs to
council, and received honor from them.
For a number of years he was made
treasurer of the annuities paid by the
U. S. Government. He was chosen with one other to take the census of
the tribe which in 1858 numbered one thousand. The last census
gives us a population of 2900. Here let us remark that the tribe
had a republican form of government. The elected chief officers of the
tribe are called Sachems and Councilors. Sachems held the office for
three years and the Councilors two years. Chief Hill was chosen

Sachem and held the office for several terms. He was early chosen a delegate to the Church Councils, and he has always upheld the Church and her Missionaries since the time of Bishop Kemper. When there was some opposition to the Missionary who was opposing the sale of their lands and the removal of the tribe, and some, instigated by the Government agent, made menacing speeches advocating the removal of the Missionary, Chief Hi: quietly said, "Well, if you do get rid of the Missionary, it will be over my dead body." It was by his brave support that the Missionary was protected, and it is due to both that the Oneidas remain unmolested in their peaceful homes today. In order to show that the Oneidas have not purchased this peace without a struggle we quote from an article written many years ago by Chief Hi: when an attempt was made to remove the Indians farther West, and much pressure was brought to bear upon all the Chiefs to sell their lands. He compares the life and manners of his people in the past, and shows their steady advancement: "the paths of civilization, and then very justly says "the whites are not willing to give us time to become civilized, but we must remove to some barbarous country as soon as civilization approaches us. The whites claim to be civilized, and from them we must learn the arts and customs of civilized life."

"The civilization which I and the greater part of my people aim at is one of truth and honor: one that will raise us to a higher state of existence here on earth, and fit us for a blessed one in the next world. For this civilization we intend to strive—right here where we are—being sure that we shall find it no sooner in the wilds beyond the Mississippi. Progress is our motto, and you who labor to deprive us of this small spot of God's footstool: will labor in vain. We will not sign your treaty: no amount of money can tempt us to sell our people. You say our answer must be given today. You can't be troubled any longer with these Council meetings. You shall have your wish—and it is one that you will hear every time you seek to drive us from our lands—'No!'"

We have, perhaps, with our fondness for the past, lingered among its legends and the stories of its heroes. We wish we could make others see what the vision is to us, and hear the voices that cry out to us from the fading past, but we must hasten on to answer the question that is in our readers' hearts. What of the Oneidas of to-day? It is no exaggeration to say that the first interest of the tribe centers round its Church. The Oneida Indian Mission, it has been said, is historic ground; it has justly been called "the Cradle of the Church in the Northwest." Twelve years before Bishop Kemper came; eighteen

years before Nasbora was thought of, Christian Indians, under a priest of their own blood, were using the ancient Liturgy and Prayers in the old log Church to which long afterwards (but still fifty years in the past) Adams and Breck walked from Nasbora to be made priests by the apostolic Kemper. The log Church, and the frame building which took its place, have now disappeared and the large stone structure, the result of many years of patient self-denial, has at last been solemnly set apart to the perpetual service of Almighty God. The consecration was the fruit of years, the crowning act of



CHANCEL OF THE CHURCH.

labors began long ago in what was then a wilderness, and the immediate preparation has shown that the spirit of self sacrifice and zeal for the honor of God's House still remains among the Oneidas, an heritage from the days of old. "My house first, and then God's House," is not an Oneida motto, and the contrast between the simple log cabins of the people, and their stately well appointed Church building, is just the reverse of what is too often seen in comparatively wealthy parishes. On the 27th of October, 1887, the Church was ready for consecration. The walls and ledges were outlined with green gar-