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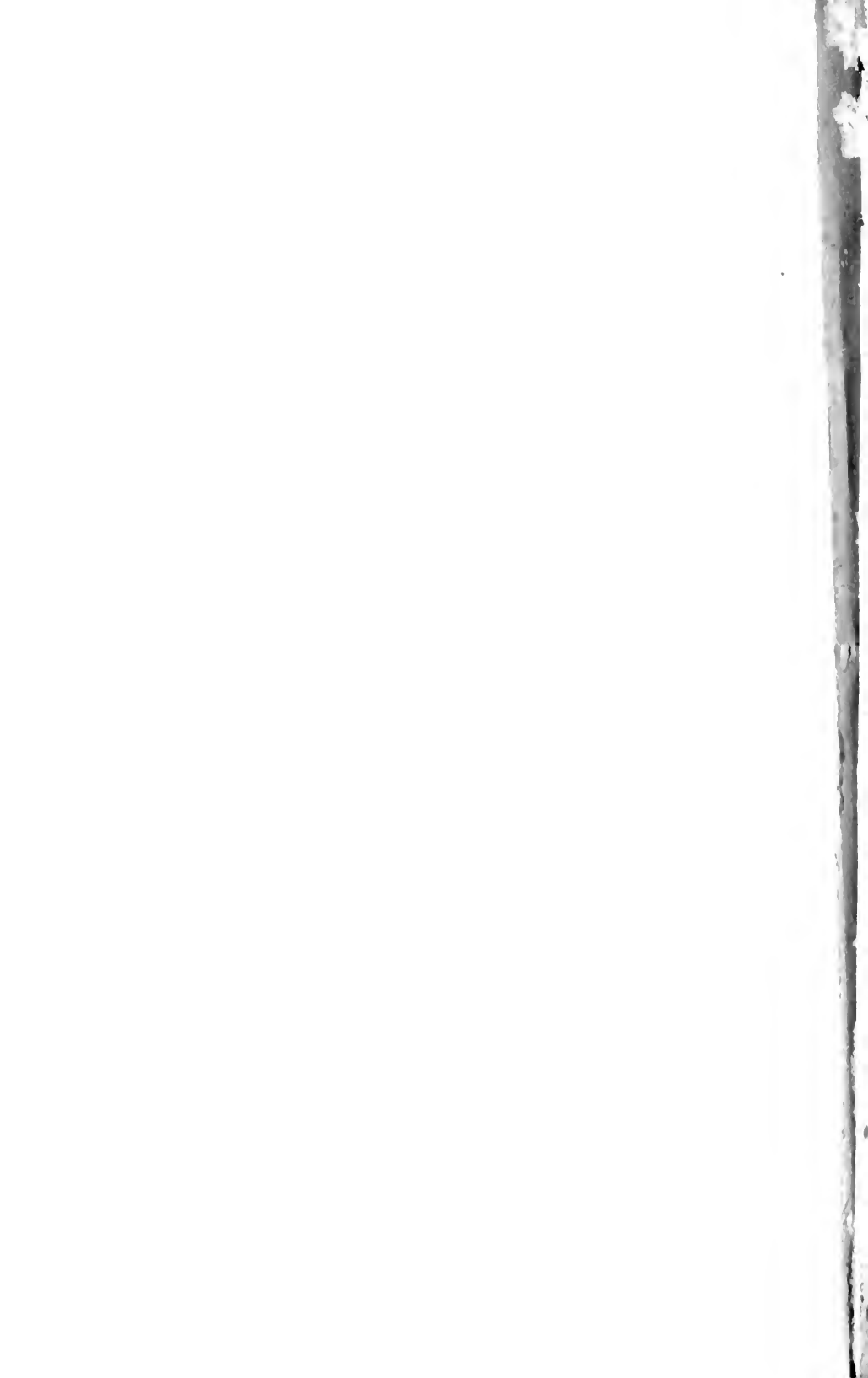
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SHEKOMOKO;

OR, THE MORAVIANS IN DUTCHESS COUNTY.

BY REV. SHELDON DAVIS, A. M.



POUGHKEEPSIE:
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PREFACE.

THE compilation of the following pages is a tribute of affectionate regard and admiration for the singular Christian faithfulness and zeal, as well as general soundness in gospel doctrine, by which the Moravians have been distinguished. Nor has the striking fact been without its special interest, that from the beginning of their very extraordinary and most successful missionary movements, they have ever been regarded with favor by the authorities of the Church of England, as an ancient Protestant Episcopal Church, deriving its Apostolic authority at all times entirely independent of Rome, from the Primitive times. The attention of the writer was first called to these interesting memorials in the discharge of his duties as Missionary of Dutchess County. And the labor of collecting them has been more than rewarded, in the contemplation of such noble examples of Christian devotion and Christian Faith, and the manifest evidence of the Divine blessing.

The principal books consulted have been:—

G. H. Loskiel's History of the United Brethren,

Holmes' " " "

Crantz's " " "

Life of Count Zinzendorff, by Spangenberg,

Heckewelder's Narrative,

Southey's Life of Wesley,

And the Documentary History of New York, Volume 3

Pleasant Valley, May 20th, 1858.

S H E K O M E K O .

THE memory of the wise and good, of the virtuous and just, of those who unrewarded in this life, have been willing to labor and suffer for the benefit of their fellow-men, should ever be held in veneration, and should ever be cherished as the most valuable heritage to those who may afterwards profit by their example, or reap the fruits of their toil. All other worldly possessions are comparatively worthless. They decay and vanish, and ultimately come to nought, but

The sweet remembrance of the just
Shall flourish when they sleep in dust.

It is with reference to such sentiments as these that we propose to call attention to, and to gather together for preservation, the scattered memorials of the ancient Moravian mission at Shekomeko, the first successful Moravian mission to the heathen in North America, and among the first efforts of a body of men, who, above all others, have distinguished themselves for their missionary zeal, and for the extraordinary success of their missionary labors.

We would not willingly forget—we would rather embalm in our memories for perpetual preservation, the whole record of this worthy and noble people. But we feel especially bound as far as we are able, to rescue from oblivion, such notices of their noble and self-denying deeds as form a part of the history of our own immediate vicinity; and to appropriate as peculiarly our own, both as respects duty and privilege; the memory of good examples, and generous conduct, and self-denying devotion to the good of others, on the part of those to whom we have succeeded; and with whose names, in the order of time, on the ever unfolding scroll of history, whether written or unwritten; doubtless written in the annals of Him who holds our times in his hand, our names shall also be inscribed.

Before entering upon the more particular history of the mission at Shekomeko, we will briefly glance at the previous history of this very remarkable people.

The Moravians claim, and that claim has never by intelligent historians been disputed, to have descended from one of the earliest churches founded by the Apostle St. Paul, in Illyricum, (Rom. 15: 19,) and by the Apostle Titus in Dalmatia, (2 Tim. 4: 10,) viz: The Slavonian branch of the Greek or Eastern Church.

Christianity was introduced into Bohemia and Moravia by two Greek Ecclesiastics, Cyrillus and Methodius, in the ninth century. About this time occurred the great schism between the Eastern and Western churches, which has continued to the present day, and which is now represented on the one hand by the Greek Church of Constantinople and Russia, and their dependencies, now numbering some 60 or 70 millions of souls; and on the other hand by the Church of Rome, the Church of England, the Moravian and other Protestant churches.

The Bohemian and Moravian Churches were thus unfortunately placed between two powerful antagonistic bodies, both of whom, but especially the Church of Rome, never scrupled to use the civil sword with all its power, to enforce submission to its decrees, and to compel obedience to the doctrines and practices which it enjoined. The controversy arose in the first place from the infamous attempt of the Church of Rome to impose upon the Eastern Church by its own authority, an alteration of the acknowledged symbol of christendom, the Nicene creed, and thus to pave the way for those subsequent corruptions of primitive truth, which has indelibly stamped upon the forehead of the Papacy, the mark of Anti-Christ.

The Bohemians and Moravians adhered to their ancient faith; and hence a long series of the most bitter persecutions fell upon them, in order to subject them, if possible, to the Papal See.—These persecutions they endured, in common with the Waldenses of France and Italy, with whom, for the most part they symbolized in doctrine, and for a considerable period, were apparently identified. Indeed Peter Waldo, the reputed founder of the Waldensian churches, is said to have finally settled and found a grave in Bohemia. From this period to the rise of John Wickliffe, at Oxford, in England, in the early part of the 14th Century, and of John Huss and Jerome of Prague in the latter part of the same Century, the Bohemians, Moravians and Waldenses, continued to

suffer similar persecutions, until the beginning of the Reformation; when, for the most part, they became absorbed in that general movement; and though the Moravians in particular, retained their ancient regimen, still they are little known in the history of subsequent times, except under the general name of Protestants; a term which embraces everything hostile, and often nothing but what is hostile, to the Church of Rome. As will appear in the sequel, the Moravian Church was founded not so much on protest against Rome, as on the basis of the original Christian faith.

With reference to JOHN HUSS, who is particularly claimed by the Moravians, as a representative of their Church, but who was cruelly martyred by the Papists in 1415, and who, among his last words, while burning at the stake, as if in prophetic foresight of the dawning Reformation, exclaimed to his tormenters, "A hundred years hence, and you shall answer for this before God and me."— We cannot forbear to present the testimony of the principal nobility of Bohemia to the Romish Council of Constance in that year.— "We know not for what purpose you have condemned John Huss, Bachelor in Divinity, and preacher of the gospel. You have put him to a cruel and ignominious death, though convicted of no heresy. We protest with the heart, as well as with the lips, that he was honest, just and orthodox; that for many years he had his conversation among us with godly and blameless manners; that during these many years he explained to us the gospel, and the books of the Old and New Testament, according to the exposition of the doctors approved by the Church; and that he has left behind him writings, in which he denounces all heresy. He taught us to detest everything heretical. He exhorted us to the practice of peace and charity, and his life exhibited a distinguished example of these virtues."

The name of *Unitas Fratrum*, or United Brethren, was the result of a formal union in 1457-'60, between the Moravians, Bohemians, and Waldenses, all of whom, afterwards, so far as they were distinctively known, bore the title of United Brethren, commonly called Moravians. About this time lived Gregory, afterwards styled the Patriarch of the Brethren, and synods were frequently held for the promotion of their common interests. "A most important subject of their deliberations," says one of their historians, "both at their synods, and at other times was how to maintain a regular succession of their ministers, when those who now exercised the ministry should

be removed by death or other causes." Suitable measures were therefore taken for this purpose, which have been constantly and regularly sustained up to the present day. The Moravians, like all the old Eastern Churches, claim to have practically, as well as theoretically maintained an uninterrupted succession of Bishops from the Apostolic times. And, notwithstanding all the fiery trials and persecutions through which they have passed, they are well able to establish that claim to the satisfaction of all reasonable and intelligent men. It was made a special subject of investigation in the early part of the last century, by the very learned and celebrated Archbishop Potter, whose deliberate opinion is fully endorsed by Dr. Bowden, and the great mass of learned men in the Church whose attention has been called to this subject.*

The Moravians were the first Christian society who employed the newly invented art of printing, for the publication of the Holy Scriptures, in a living language for general distribution among the people. The first edition was published at Venice about the year 1470, being the oldest printed version of the Bible in any European language. Before the commencement of the Reformation by Luther in 1517, the Moravians had already issued three editions of the Scriptures.

After this, however, they were subjected to a series of most violent persecutions, until they were apparently well nigh extinguished. In the midst of the greatest trials, apprehensions and fears, yet hoping against hope, their extinction was prevented and their restoration was again commenced by John Amos Comenius, who was consecrated a Bishop of the Brethren's Church in 1632, and who made earnest and repeated applications to all the Protestant princes in Europe, and particularly to the English Nation, the most powerful support of Protestantism, to patronize the suffering Church to which he belonged. Nor were these applications unsuccessful. A strong sympathy was created in England in their favor, and in 1710 an order was issued from the Privy Council, "For the relief and for preserving the Episcopal Churches in Great Poland and Polish Russia."

* Opinion of Archbishop Potter, regarding the Moravians, in 1737. "That the Moravian Brethren, being an Apostolic and Episcopal Church, not sustaining any doctrine contrary to the XXXIX Articles of the Church of England; that they therefore could not with propriety, nor ought to be hindered from preaching the Gospel to the heathen. —Crantz' History of the United Brethren, P. 214.

This brings us down to nearly the period, when under the direction of Christian David and Count Zinzendorff, who had just established themselves in Herrnhut, in Germany; the Moravians commenced their very remarkable and successful labors among the heathen, and found their way for this purpose first to Greenland, in 1733; a mission which has been singularly prosperous, and very noted up to the present day; then to the Creek and Cherokee Indians in Georgia, under the patronage, and with the aid of the distinguished George Whitfield and John Wesley, in 1735; and then after the establishment of their colony at Bethlehem, their headquarters in this country, to these shores, and to the Mohican and Wampano Indians at Shekomeko and its vicinity.

In the language of the late celebrated poet James Montgomery who was himself a Moravian, brought up an orphan among the Moravians, the son of Moravian parents, who died on the Missionary field in the West Indies, and the largest and most liberal supporter of the Moravian missions,

Tw'as thus through centuries she rose and fell,
 At length victorious seemed the gates of hell:
 But founded on a rock which cannot move—
 Th' eternal rock of the Redeemer's love—
 That church which Satan's legions thought destroyed,
 Her name extinct, her place forever void,
 Alive once more, respired her native air,
 But found no freedom for the voice of prayer.
 Then Christian David, strengthened from above;
 Wise as the serpent, harmless as the dove;
 Bold as a lion on his Master's part,
 In zeal a seraph, and a child in heart.
 Plucked from the gripe of antiquated laws,
 (Even as a mother from the felon jaws
 Of a lean wolf that bears her babe away,
 With courage beyond nature rears the prey.)
 The little remnant of that ancient race,
 Far in Lusitanian wilds they found a place;
There—where the sparrow builds her busy nest,
 And the clime changing swallow loves to rest,
 Thine altar God of Hosts! *there* still appear
 The tribes to worship unassailed by fear:
 Not like their fathers vexed from age to age
 By blatant bigotry's insensate rage,
 Abroad in every place, in every hour
 Awake, alert, and raving to devour.
 No, peaceful as the spot where Jacob slept,
 And guard all night the journeying angels kept,
 Herrnhut yet stands, amidst her sheltered bowers;
 The Lord hath set his watch upon her towers.

GREENLAND.

At Herrnhut, in the province of Upper Lusatia in Germany, was established upon the estate of Count Zinzendorf, a German nobleman, by the emigrant Bohemians and Moravians, the Church, to which through long ages of persecution and suffering, their ancestors in the faith, like themselves, had most rigidly and faithfully adhered.

The point in their organization to which they attached the utmost importance, was strict adherence to the model of the Primitive Church, both in doctrine and practice, as it had been retained by them, for the most part, in conformity to the Greek ritual, but ever in determined and uncompromising hostility to the corruptions of Rome, from their Slavonian ancestors in the primitive times.

The Moravians have always refused to be recognized as a *Sect*, and have in numerous instances protested against the use of that term, as descriptive of their history or character. And though several individuals, have at different times, attained to great distinction among them, yet they have steadily declined either to place themselves under the direction of any individual leader, or to be known or recognized as the followers or adherents of any one man.

The term by which they designate themselves, and by which they prefer to be designated, is that of United Brethren, as best descriptive of the actual composition of the body, and as marking that great principle of Christian unity, on which they so strongly insist, as essential to the integrity of the Christian Church.

In doctrine they are thoroughly sound and orthodox. Their system of faith would probably be regarded by the great mass of the Christian world as less objectionable than perhaps that of any other Christian body now in existence; harmonizing very closely with that of the Church of England, and avoiding with almost superhuman exactness, on either hand, the peculiar dogmas of the Lutheran, the Calvinistic, and the Armenian systems, as well as the gross pollution, tyranny and idolatry of Rome. And its practical working as carried out in their extensive and very extraordinary missionary operations, presents a pleasing and most interesting development of practical and experimental piety, in close combination with strict sacramental observances—a careful preparation on the one hand, for the reception of the appointed ordinances of the gospel, and the full recognition on the other, of all those spiritual graces and gifts which

were uniformly held by all the early Christian Churches to belong to the sacramental seals of the covenant of God. The zeal of the Moravian body, says William Wilberforce, "is a zeal tempered with prudence, softened with meekness, soberly aiming at great ends, by the gradual operation of well adapted means, supported by a courage which no danger can intimidate, and a quiet constancy which no hardships can exhaust."

It is a remarkable, and very significant circumstance, that the founder of Methodism, the Rev. John Wesley, was a cotemporary with Count Zinzendorff, the distinguished Bishop of the Moravians; and that for a considerable length of time, he was intimately associated with the Moravians, and derived directly from them the most important modifications and improvements of his religious character, and the germs and principles of that great religious movement, in which he was so prominent an actor. The Methodist Discipline was the work of John Wesley, at a period when he was in constant intercourse with the Moravians; who, by his own confession, became his teachers in some of the most important Christian principles, and especially in those which have constituted the real strength of Methodism up to the present time, the *subjective* influence of Christian Faith and Hope.

The circumstance which first and most deeply affected him, was the calmness and composure which the Moravians were able to maintain in scenes of the greatest danger and terror. For example: During their passage from England to Georgia, they were overtaken by a furious storm, and while the missionaries were at prayers, a tremendous wave struck the vessel, and poured a flood of water over them. Wesley, thoroughly alarmed, cried out with consternation and fear; while the Moravians, women and children, as well as men, quietly continued their devotions, with no apparent apprehension or fear; and as though that which they taught, were indeed felt to be a reality; that death was not loss, but gain.

In many respects also Count Zinzendorff, and the Rev. John Wesley were kindred spirits. Both were exceedingly enthusiastic in their temperament. Both were greatly inclined to depend on their feelings and mental impressions, in matters of religion. And both from their youth, were strongly inclined to dwell upon the supernatural, in all the affairs of life.

The Moravians, from the beginning, have confined their missionary labors to the conversion of the heathen. They have always

held it unchristian to build upon other men's foundations, or to proselyte from other religious bodies, whose full christian character they recognized. And hence their establishments at Herrnhut in Germany, at Fulneck in England, and at Bethlehem in Pa., are little else than missionary colleges, adapted to preparation for the work which they regard as more peculiarly their own; the *preaching of the gospel to the heathen*, and proclaiming the glad tidings of gospel grace to those who have never heard of a Saviour; but are still sitting in the region and shadow of death.

After their abandonment of the missions to the Indians in Georgia, which was dispersed on account of political troubles with the Spaniards, the Moravians sought the opportunity to engage in some other field of labor, where they might if possible, without interference, proclaim the glad tidings of salvation to the benighted savages of this, then new, and sparsely inhabited country. One of the Brethren, therefore, Christian Henry Rauch, was dispatched for this purpose to New York.

The instructions given to such Missionaries were to this effect:—“That they should silently observe whether any of the heathen had been prepared by the grace of God to receive and believe the word of Life. If even only one were to be found, then they should preach the gospel to him; for God must give the heathen ears to hear the gospel, and hearts to receive it, otherwise, all their labors upon them, would be in vain. They were to preach chiefly to such as had never heard of the gospel; not to build upon foundations laid by others, nor to disturb their work, but to seek the outcast and the forsaken.”

Br. Rauch arrived at New York July 16th, 1740, where he unexpectedly met with the Missionary Frederic Martin, from St. Thomas, West Indies; by whom he was introduced to several influential persons, who, it was thought, would take an interest in the work, and from whom he expected to derive information with reference to the Indians, and with regard to the best mode of gaining an influence with them; but they unanimously discouraged the attempt, telling him plainly that every such attempt had been thus far an utter failure; that the Indians were universally of such a vicious and abandoned character, that all efforts at their improvement or reformation, would be dangerous, as well as utterly in vain. Not at all discouraged, however, by this representation, in a manner characteristic of the Moravians, he proceeded to seek out an embassy

of Mohican Indians, who had lately arrived in New York on business with the Colonial Government, and sought an opportunity of conversing with them, which he found he could do in the Dutch language, with which from their intercourse with the Dutch settlements along the Hudson river, he found that they were slightly acquainted. At his first visit, and indeed for a considerable length of time, he found them in a state of beastly intoxication, and terribly ferocious in their appearance and manners. Carefully watching, however, an opportunity of finding them sober, he at last addressed himself to two of the principal chiefs, Tschoop, and Shabash, and without ceremony asked them whether they wished for a teacher to instruct them in the way of salvation, Tschoop answered in the affirmative, adding that he frequently felt disposed to know better things than he did; but knew not how nor where to find them, therefore if any one would come and instruct him and his acquaintance, he should be thankful. Shabash also giving his assent, the missionary rejoiced to hear the declaration, considered it as a call from God, and promised at once to accompany them and to visit their people, upon which "they declared him to be their teacher with true Indian solemnity."

The place to which the devoted Missionary, led by these wild savages, now directed his steps, was Shekomeko, the beautiful Indian name of the region now known as Pine Plains, Dutchess Co., N. Y. The site of the ancient Indian village was about two miles south of the present village, near "the Bethel." It was located on the farm now occupied by Mr. Edward Hunting, a most beautiful and romantic spot; such a spot as those who appreciate the nobler traits of the Indian character, would be prepared to find a chosen Indian haunt; and where a passing traveller might even now almost be disappointed not to be startled by the native whoop of the wild and ferocious red man of the forest, or at least to be charmed by the sweeter music of the Christian hymns taught them by the faithful Moravians, who in their Missionary huts, or in the woods and groves by which they were surrounded, often called to mind the favorite lines sung by the ancient Bohemian brethren:

The rugged rocks, the dreary wilderness,
Mountains and woods are our appointed place;
Midst storms and waves, on heathen shores unknown,
We have our temple, and serve God alone.

The proper Indian name Shekomeko, or Chicomico, is still in

good taste retained, for the stream which rising near "The Federal Square," runs in a northerly direction, near the site of the ancient Indian village Shekomeko, and unites with the Roelif Jansen's Creek in Columbia County.

Br. Rauch arrived at Shekomeko August 16th, 1740, and was received in the Indian manner with great kindness. He immediately spoke to them on the subject of man's redemption, and they listened with marked attention. But on the next day when he began to speak with them, he perceived with sorrow, that his words excited derision; and at last, they openly laughed him to scorn. Not discouraged, however, by this conduct; he persisted in visiting the Indians daily in their huts, representing to them the evil of sin, and extolling the grace of God revealed in Jesus Christ, and the full atonement made by him, as the only way by which they might be saved from perdition. In these labors he encountered many hardships. Living after the Indian manner, he had no means of transit from one place to another, but on foot through the wilderness. And suffering from heat and fatigue, he was often denied even the poor shelter of an Indian hut for refreshment and rest.

His labors, however, did not long continue without their reward. The Indians became gradually more attentive to his instructions; and impressed with the devoted zeal with which he evidently labored for their good, so different from the ordinary conduct of the white man towards them, they began to treat him with greater confidence and respect. The first who discovered any serious earnestness for salvation, and desire to be instructed in the gospel was Tsehoop, one of the two Indians whom the Missionary had met in New York; the greatest drunkard, and the most outrageous villain among them. To the great delight of the Missionary he asked: "What effect the blood of the Son of God slain on the cross could produce in the heart of man?" and he thus opened the way to a full explanation of the scheme of salvation through the blood and atonement of Jesus Christ. Shabash also soon began to exhibit a similar interest. And the work of the Holy spirit, convincing them of sin became remarkably evident in the hearts of these two savages. Their eyes would overflow with tears, whenever the faithful Moravian described to them the sufferings and death of our Redeemer. This unusual effect of the preaching of the gospel upon the poor and despised Indians, who were commonly regarded by the whites, as a horde of abandoned and incorrigible wretches, soon awakened their

attention. And the missionary, who came to preach to the heathen, was now invited to preach to the white settlers also about Shekomeko, whose language, and especially whose vices, the degraded heathen had but learned too well.

The change which took place in the character and conduct of Tschoop was very striking. For he had been notorious for his wildness and recklessness, and had even made himself a cripple by his debauchery. Having become a preacher and an interpreter among the Indians, he related after the following manner, the occasion and circumstances of his conversion :

“Brethren, I have been a heathen, and have grown old among the heathen, therefore I know how the heathen think. Once a preacher came and began to explain to us that there was a God. We answered : Dost thou think we are so ignorant as not to know that ?— Go back to the place from whence thou camest. Then again, another preacher came and began to teach us and to say, you must not steal, nor lie, nor get drunk, &c. We answered : Thou fool, dost thou think that we don't know that ? Learn first thyself, and then teach the people to whom thou belongest, to leave off these things, for who steal and lie, or who are more drunken than thine own people ? And thus we dismissed him. After some time Brother Christian Henry Rauch came into my hut and sat down by me. He spoke to me nearly as follows : I come to you in the name of the Lord of Heaven and Earth. He sends to let you know that he is willing to make you happy, and to deliver you from the misery in which you are at present. To this end he became a man, gave his life as a ransom for man, and shed his blood for him. When he had finished, he lay down upon a board, being fatigued with his journey, and fell into a sound sleep. I then thought what kind of a man is this ? There he lies and sleeps, I might kill him and throw him into the woods, and who would regard it ? But this gives him no concern. However, I could not forget his words. They constantly recurred to my mind. Even when I slept I dreamed of that blood which Christ shed for us. This was something different from what I had ever before heard. And I interpreted Christian Henry's words to the other Indians.”

But now many of the white settlers, who, while they corrupted and abused, and vilified the Indians, lived upon their vices, and made large gains especially by their drunkenness, conceived that their interests would be injured by the success of the Missionary. They

therefore stirred up the more vicious Indians, and raised a persecution against him, and even instigated them to threaten his life if he did not leave the place. And no pains were spared on their part, to hinder the good work which he had begun among them, and even to seduce, if possible, into their former wretched way of life, the two chiefs, whose remarkable conversion had become so notorious throughout the country.

In this extremity the name of John Rau should be mentioned with honor, for his noble and disinterested protection and defence of the persecuted Moravian. He became his warm and steadfast friend.— And during all their subsequent troubles he was the faithful and untiring advocate of the devoted Missionaries; and until at last, by an unjust and persecuting act of the Colonial Government, they were driven from the province, he still adhered, and persuaded others to adhere, to their righteous cause.

Br. Rauch, by his meek and peaceable deportment, his prudent and cautious conduct, and his undaunted courage, praying for his enemies, and sowing the word of God in tears, for a time overcame, in great measure, all these obstacles. He regained the confidence of the Indians. He repelled the envious slanders of his enemies. And his work began again to flourish, and to gather new strength from the manifold difficulties and dangers, with which he had been surrounded. Several new converts were made, and the mission assumed a highly interesting and promising character. In 1741 it was visited by Bishop David Nutschman, the companion and fellow-laborer of Count Zinzendorf.

About this period was sent to Shekomeko from Bethlehem, as a companion and aid of Rauch, the gentle and laborious Gottlob Buettner, a martyr to the blessed work upon which he then entered, and whose grave at Shekomeko has called up, and preserved the memory of this noble effort of the Moravians, and whose brief history is of the greatest interest in connection with this mission. He preached for the first time to the Indians at Shekomeko, January 14th, 1742, from Colossians 1: 13, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."

February 14th, 1742, were ordained deacons, at Oty in Pennsylvania, by the Bishops, David Nutschman and Count Zinzendorf, the two missionaries from Shekomeko, Christian Henry Rauch and Gottlob Buettner. And on the same day Rauch, who, as well as Buettner, had heretofore acted as a layman, baptized three of the Indian cou-

verts who had accompanied them from Shekomeko; the first fruits of perhaps the most remarkable Indian mission on record. *Tschoop was not among them. From his lameness he had been unable to take the long journey.

He was, however, baptized at Shekomeko on the 16th of April following, receiving the christian name of John.

The following is a portion of the letter dictated to the brethren on the occasion above referred to when his companions were baptized:

"I have been a poor, wild heathen, and for forty years as ignorant as a dog. I was the greatest drunkard, and the most willing slave of the devil; and as I knew nothing of our Saviour, I served vain idols, which I now wish to see destroyed with fire. Of this I have repented with many tears. When I heard that Jesus was also the Saviour of the heathen, and that I ought to give him my heart, I felt a drawing within me towards him. But my wife and children were my enemies; and my greatest enemy was my wife's mother. She told me that I was worse than a dog, if I no more believed in her idol. But my eyes being opened, I understood that what she said was altogether folly, for I knew that she had received her idol from her grand-mother. It is made of leather, and decorated with wampum, and she, being the oldest person in the house, made us worship it; which we have done, till our teacher came, and told us of the Lamb of God, who shed His blood, and died for us poor ignorant people.

"Now I feel and believe, that our Saviour alone can help me, by the power of His blood, and no other. I believe that he is *my* God and *my* Saviour, who died on the cross for *me* a sinner. I wish to be baptized, and long for it most ardently. I am lame, and cannot travel in winter; but in April or May I will come to you.

"I am your poor wild

"Tschoop."

The wonderful change which had taken place in this wild Indian, and in the others who had been baptized, awakened the attention of the other Indians, and from twenty and thirty miles round, they constantly flocked to Shekomeko, to hear the new preacher, who spoke, to use their own language, "of a God who became a man, and had

* These three Indians were Shabash baptized Abraham; Seim, Isaac; and Kiop, Jacob.

loved the Indians so much that he gave up his life to rescue them from the devil, and from the service of sin."

In the summer of 1742, the mission at Shekomeko was visited by the Bishop Count Zinzendorf, who was on this occasion accompanied by his beautiful and interesting daughter Benigna. They crossed the country from Bethlehem in Pennsylvania to Esopus (now Kingston), and arrived at Shekomeko on the 27th of August, "after passing through," to use his own expression, "dreadful wildernesses, woods and swamps, in which he and his companions suffered great hardships." Br. Rauch received them into his hut with great joy, and the day following, lodged them in a cottage of bark. Count Zinzendorf afterwards declared this cottage to have been the most agreeable dwelling he had ever inhabited. On the occasion of this visit six Indians were baptized by the missionary Rauch. A regular congregation was then formed, the first congregation of believing Indians established in North America, consisting of ten persons.

September 4th, 1742, Count Zinzendorf took leave of this interesting mission, and was accompanied to Bethlehem by two Indians as guides, who were there baptized by Gottlob Buettner, and called respectively David and Joshua. Count Zinzendorf assisted in the administration. This was the first baptism of Indians at Bethlehem.

October 1st, 1742, Gottlob Buettner and his wife rejoined the missionary Rauch at Shekomeko, and devoted themselves with great energy and success to the instruction of the Indians, constantly reading to them the Holy Scriptures, and explaining to them the doctrines of the Word of God.

December 6th, 1742, was laid out a burying-ground for the use of the baptized, the same in which the missionary Buettner was afterwards buried. At the end of the year 1742, the number of baptized Indians in Shekomeko was 31.

About this time arrived Martin Mack and his wife to assist in the mission. Br. Mack however soon took charge of the station at Pachgatgoch, (now Seaticook, at Kent, Ct.) where the success of the Moravians was even greater than at Shekomeko, and where at intervals, they continued to labor for more than twenty years. A portion of the tribe is still remaining, and their history is full of melancholy interest, and worthy of an imperishable record.

March 13th, 1743. The Holy Communion was, after due preparation, for the first time, administered to the firstlings of the Indian nations at Shekomeko. It was preceded by a Love Feast, and followed

by the Pedilavium, or washing of one another's feet, both of which are established customs among the Moravians. The missionary writes: "While I live I shall never lose the impression this first communion with the Indians in North America made upon me."

In July, 1743, the new chapel at Shekomeko was finished and consecrated. The building was thirty feet long and twenty broad. It was entirely covered with smooth bark. It is represented to have been a very appropriate and commodious building, quite striking in its appearance, and of great convenience to the mission. It was constantly open on Sundays and on Festival occasions; and the greatest interest was exhibited by the Indians in the religious services which were regularly and constantly held in their new chapel. But troubles now began again to thicken upon the missionaries and their new converts. "The white people who had been accustomed to make the dissolute life of the Indians, but chiefly their love of ardent spirits, subservient to their advantage, were greatly enraged when they saw that the Indians began to turn from their evil doings, and to avoid all those sinful practices which had been so profitable to the traders. They therefore caught at every false rumor and evil imputation which was put in circulation against the missionaries. They were publicly branded with the epithets of papists and traitors; and the public authorities, both in New York and Connecticut, were called upon to interfere for the purpose of banishing them from the country. Three of them were taken up at Pachgatgoch, and after being dragged up and down the country for three days, they were, upon a hearing, honorably dismissed by the Governor of Connecticut; yet their accusers insisted upon their being bound over in a penalty of one hundred pounds to keep the laws of the country, when they immediately retired to Shekomeko, whither they were followed by many of the Indians, whom they had instructed, and where many others constantly resorted to them to receive their instructions.

No charges could be more preposterous and utterly without foundation, than those of papists and traitors against the harmless Moravians, whose whole previous history as a people, consisted of little else than an account of their good works, and the persecutions and sufferings, which, on account of them, they had endured at the hand of the Church of Rome: and who had always made it a fixed principle of their policy, never to interfere with the politics of the countries where they sojourned, but to labor simply for the spiritual benefit of their fellow-men: even offering—though the

sacrifice was not required—to sell themselves for slaves in the West Indies, in order to gain an opportunity of instructing the poor negroes, and who were rewarded for such self-devotion, by almost unbounded success, in a short period numbering their converts by thousands among that neglected and degraded race.

Just previous to the departure of Count Zinzendorf to Europe, in the beginning of the year 1743, he sent Br. Shaw to Shekomeko as a schoolmaster to the Indian children; and not long after the Brethren Pyreus, and Senseman, and Frederic Post, (the last of whom had married a baptized Indian woman) with their wives, joined the mission.

At the close of the year 1743, the congregation of baptized Indians in Shekomeko consisted of sixty-three persons, exclusive of those belonging to the neighboring station at Pachgatgoch, and a much greater number of constant and regular hearers.

About this time however commenced the difficulties between the French and English Governments, with reference to the Colonial boundaries, which a few years afterwards, resulted in the bloody war in which our great and good Washington first distinguished himself as a soldier. In the intrigues connected with these troubles, the Romish Jesuits, as usual, were incessantly employed on the part of the French, to alienate the various Indian tribes from the English colonies, and to prepare them, in the event of war, to act efficiently in their favor, in the sanguinary contest. The fears of the white settlers in all parts of the country were thoroughly alarmed. The Indians were generally looked upon as enemies; and any man who befriended them, was almost necessarily regarded as a confidant or spy of the French, or of the treacherous and malignant Jesuits.

This state of the public mind afforded an excellent opportunity for the enemies of the missionaries at Shekomeko to give currency to false and injurious reports with reference to them. They were charged with being Papists and Jesuits in disguise, who were only preparing the Indians for a general massacre of the colonists; and they were accused of having arms secreted for that purpose. These reports so terrified the inhabitants, that many of them forsook their farms, and the others placed themselves under arms for their mutual defence.

March 1st, 1744. Mr. Justice Hagaman, of Filkentown, (now Malbitsville, or Little Post,) visited Shekomeko, and informed the missionaries, that it was his duty to inquire what sort of people the brethren were, for that the most dangerous tenets were ascribed to

them; that for himself, however, he gave no credit to the lying reports which were circulated concerning them, and he was fully convinced that the mission at Shekomeko was indeed a work of God. because by the labors of the Brethren, the most savage heathen had been so evidently changed, that he and many other christians were put to shame by their godly walk and conversation. Buettner, the principal missionary, was at this time absent in Bethlehem. Immediately upon his return, the missionaries were summoned to Pickipsi (Poughkeepsie) to exercise with the militia, which they refused on the ground that as ministers of the Gospel, they could not legally be required to bear arms.

On June 24th, 1744, a Justice of the Peace arrived at Shekomeko from Pickipsi to examine into the whole affair. He admitted that the accusations made against the missionaries were entirely groundless. But he required them to take two oaths, as involving the matters concerning which they had been accused, and which had been the occasion of the interference of the Government:

1st. That King George being the lawful sovereign of the kingdom, they would not in any way encourage the Pretender.

2d. That they rejected Transubstantiation, the worship of the Virgin Mary, Purgatory, &c.

To every point contained in these oaths, Buettner assured him that they could entirely agree. And though they could not in good conscience take an oath, being restrained by the religious principles which as members of the Brethrens Church they had adopted, yet they were willing to be bound to the last extremity, by their asseveration, Yes, or No. The Justice expressed his satisfaction for the present, but required them to be bound over in a penalty of forty pounds to appear before the court in Pickipsi on the 16th of October following.

On June 22d they were summoned to Reinbeck, where they were called upon in public court, before Justice Beckman, to prove that they were privileged teachers. Buettner produced his written vocation, and his certificate of ordination, duly signed by Bishop David Nitschman.

And again on the 14th of July, on account of the increasing public dissatisfaction, they were required by the magistrates to appear at Filkentown; and here, while no reliable testimony appeared against them, their firm friend John Rau appeared in their favor, and gave a decisive and noble testimony from his own intimate knowledge, in their defence.

In the mean time their adversaries had repeatedly accused them before the Hon. George Clinton, then Governor of the Colony of New York, until he finally resolved to send for them, and to examine into the truth of these startling reports. Buettner and Senseman, from Shekomeko, and Shaw, from Bethlehem, went accordingly to New York, and found, upon their arrival, that the attention of the whole town was aroused concerning them. Mr. Justice Beekman, however, who had before examined them in Reinbeck, publicly took their part in New York, and affirmed that "the good done by them among the Indians was undeniable."

The commencement of these proceedings before the Governor of New York was at a Council, held at the Council Chamber, in the City of New York, on the fifth of July, 1744, at which his Excellency communicated to the Board, that he had sent letters to Col. Henry Beekman, one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for Dutchess Co. and Col. of the Militia for that county; acquainting him with the information which he had received concerning the Moravians, and requiring him to make the necessary investigation.

His Excellency also communicated to the Board, a letter from Col. Beekman to the effect that there were four Moravian Priests and many Indians at Schaconico, and that he had made search for arms and ammunition, but could find none, nor hear of any. But that before the receipt of his Excellency's order, the Sheriff, Justice of the Peace and eight others were at Schaconico, where they found all the Indians at work on their plantations, who seemed in a consternation at the approach of the Sheriff and his company, but received them civilly. That they found no ammunition and as few arms as could be expected for such a number of men. That they denied that they were disaffected to the crown, saying that they themselves were afraid of the French and of their Indians, and that their only business at Schaconico was to gain souls among the heathen. That they had a commission from the Archbishop of Canterbury, and were ready to show their credentials. That the Justice demanded of them to take the oaths, but they refused, as they alleged, through a scruple of conscience. And that the Justice then bound them over to answer what should be objected against them.

Upon the examination of the missionaries Buettner, Shaw and Senseman, before the Governor and Council, these statements were again reiterated and were made the subject of careful and deliberate investigation. And at a subsequent meeting of the Council, it was conclu-

ded—"As to the Moravian Priests: The General Assembly of this Province having ordered in a Bill for the securing this his Majesty's Government, the Council were of opinion to advise his Excellency to Order the Moravian Priests back to their homes, and required them to live there peaceably, and await the further orders of his Excellency."

The prosecution of the Moravians thus far was under the Provincial law against the Jesuits, passed July 31st, 1700. The Bill above referred to, passed the Colonial Assembly, Sept. 21st, 1744. It expired by its own limitation Sept. 21st, 1745. Only the Title is published in any copy of the Colonial Laws, to which the writer has been able, as yet, to gain access. But that it was to the last degree unjust and persecuting, evidently appears from all the documentary evidence connected with it. Indeed the earnest Protest of Count Zinzendorf, and other leading Moravians, together with the demand of the Board of Trade for an explanation, induced the Governor and Council to publish officially, the reasons which they supposed had influenced the Assembly in the passage of the law—a document which for its misconceptions of the real character of the zealous and good men against whom it was aimed, and the odious imputations which it casts upon them, is seldom equalled.* It is some palliation, perhaps, of these persecuting measures, that the public mind was exceedingly sensitive, and that the whole country was filled with rumors to the prejudice of the harmless Moravians. But, on the other hand, it is equally true, that they had fully proved themselves clear of every charge that had been preferred against them, and finally secured a full vindication by the highest authority of the British Government; for by an Act of the British Parliament, passed May 12th, 1749:

1. "The *Unitas Fratrum* were acknowledged as an ancient Protestant Episcopal Church.
2. Those of its members who scrupled to take an oath were exempted from it, on making a declaration in the presence of Almighty God, as witness of the truth.
3. They were exempted from acting as jurymen.
4. They were entirely exempted from military duty under reasonable conditions."

Such was the ultimate result of the remonstrances of the Moravians to the British and colonial governments; a result, however, so tardy as that, though it aided their subsequent missionary efforts, it was yet

*Doc. Hist. of N. York, Vol. III, Page 1022.

of little or no service to the poor Christian Indians and their self-denying teachers at Shekomeko.

Sept. 9th, 1744, Buettner was again required to appear at Pickipsi, but was again honorably dismissed. So that, notwithstanding all the trouble and vexation to which they had been subjected, they were found to be entirely innocent, and had established the conviction in the minds of the great mass of the people, of their entire sincerity, and of the great good arising from their labours.

Their adversaries were therefore foiled in this direction. But they had adopted other expedients, which were more successful, for on the fifteenth of December, 1744, the Sheriff and three Justices of the Peace arrived at Shekomeko, and in the name of the Governor and Council of New York, prohibited all meetings of the Brethren, and commanded the missionaries to appear before the Court at Pickipsi, on the seventeenth. Buettner being ill, the other missionaries alone appeared, when the Act before referred to, which had been passed with special reference to their case, was read to them; by which the ministers of the congregation of the Brethren, employed in teaching the Indians, were expelled the country, under pretence of being in league with the French, and forbidden, under a heavy penalty, ever more to appear among the Indians, without having first taken the oaths of allegiance.

Soon afterwards the station at Shekomeko was visited by the Moravian Bishop, A. G. Spangenberg, with the view of devising some means by which the missionaries might still carry on their work. But all in vain. After a stay of two weeks, he was obliged to leave the converted Indians and their friends, still exposed to all the evil influences by which they were surrounded.

“And not long after,” says the Moravian historian, “the white people came to a resolution to drive the believing Indians from Shekomeko, by main force, on pretence that the ground on which the town was built belonged to others. The white people took possession of the land, and then appointed a watch to prevent all visits from the Moravians at Bethlehem.”

Thus, by such unworthy means, was summarily broken up and dispersed, the most promising, and the most important, mission to the Aborigines in this country which had as yet been established—a mission which, if it had continued, might have preserved a remnant of that unhappy people, who were soon afterward dispersed

and scattered abroad, never again to be gathered, and never again to be blessed with such noble and self-denying teachers, as the faithful Moravians, who labored with such devoted zeal at Shekomeko.

Gottlob Buettner soon ended his weary pilgrimage. He gently and happily fell asleep in Christ on Feb. 23d, 1745, in the twenty-ninth year of his age. Blessed be his memory. The Indians wept over him like children over a beloved parent. They dressed his corpse in white, and buried him with great solemnity in the burying ground at Shekomeko, watering his grave with their tears, and for a long time afterwards they used to visit and weep over it. The stone afterwards placed over his grave contained the following inscription, in German: "Here lies the body of Gottlob Buettner, who according to the commandment of his crucified God and Saviour, brought the glad tidings to the heathen, that the blood of [Jesus had made an atonement for their sins. As many as embraced this doctrine in faith were baptized into the death of the Lord. His last prayer was that they might be preserved until the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was born Dec. 29th, 1716. and fell asleep in the Lord February 23d, 1745."

Only a small portion of this stone, very much mutilated and scarcely at all intelligible, is still preserved. The locality is still shown by the proprietor, Mr. Edward Hunting, as also the locality of the missionary buildings, some portions of the foundations of which are still recognized. The orchard planted by the missionaries has within a few years past, with the exception of a single apple-tree, entirely disappeared; and the medicinal roots which they cultivated here, until quite recently, refused to quit their home in the soil, but, as if prompted by the instinct of Moravian zeal and love to man, have remained a blessing to those who have since continued to dwell about the spot.

The effect of the persecuting measures of their enemies, and the death of their beloved teacher, was exceedingly disheartening to the poor Indians. A portion of them removed to Pachgatgoch, where they attempted to make themselves a home among the tribe which resided there. Another portion formed a colony at Wechquatnaek, on the eastern border of Indian Pond, [Indian, Wequagnok, or Wequodnoe,] in the town of Sharon, Ct. And at this place was formed an Indian congregation under the charge of the Moravians David Bruce, a Moravian missionary, a Scotchman by birth, was appointed to the station, where he died greatly lamented in 1749. When the soil came into the possession of the present occupant, Mr

Andrew Lake, the grave stone was missing; but a portion of it containing the inscription was afterwards found, laid as a common stone into a stone wall. The inscription is as follows: "David Bruce, "from Edinburgh, in Scotland, Minister of the Brethren's Church "among the Indians—Departed 1749."

After the dispersion of the Indians at Wechquatnack, a Moravian congregation of white persons seems to have been established on the western side of Indian Pond in the town of North East, on the present farm of Mr. Douglass Clark. Here was a meeting house built, which was standing until within a few years; and near the spot, in an adjoining burying ground, is the grave of the Rev. Joseph Powell—doubtless the Moravian missionary of that name. As appears from the stone which stood at his grave, he died in 1774, aged 63.

Another portion of the Indian congregation at Shekomeko emigrated with their teachers to Pennsylvania, where they attempted to form a colony, which was fruitless. The name given to this colony, as significant of the condition and hopes of the Indians, was Freidenushutten—(Tents of Peace). These Indians finally settled at Gnadenhutten, (Tents of Grace). Among the Christian Indians who settled there was the noble Indian interpreter, John, formerly Tschoop. John finally became a victim, at Bethlehem, of that terrible scourge of the Indians, the small pox. "As a heathen," says the Moravian historian, "John distinguished himself by his sinful practices. And as his vices became the more seductive on account of his natural wit and humor, so as a Christian he became a most powerful and persuasive witness of our Saviour among his nation. His gifts were sanctified by the grace of God, and employed in such a manner as to be the means of blessing, both to Europeans and Indians. Few of his countrymen could vie with him in point of Indian oratory. His discourses were full of animation, and his words penetrated like fire into the hearts of his countrymen. In short he appeared chosen by God to be a witness to his people, and

*1753. In the Province of New York and New England, where the Brethren formerly suffered much, they were now invited to preach.—In the City of New York itself they built a church: and the evangelical testimony, and exemplary work of those Brethren who as missionaries ministered in the gospel to the Indians at Puckerhook, and Wechquatnack in New England, left a good impression in those parts. Their white neighbors in Dutchess Co., New York government, begged for and obtained a minister from Bethlehem.—[Cranz's History of the United Brethren, page 401]

was four years active in this service. Nor was he less respected as a chief among the Indians; no affairs of state being transacted without his advice and consent. During his illness, the believing Indians went often, and stood weeping around his bed. Even then he spoke, with power and energy, of the truth of the gospel, and in all things he approved himself, to his last breath, as a minister of God."

John died at Bethlehem, August 27th, 1746, where his remains now lie buried with those of many other Indians.

Driven from their ancestral home, and deprived of their new born Christian privileges and hopes, by the rapacious and unprincipled hostility of the white man, the ultimate dispersion and final annihilation of this interesting tribe of Indians, is only the more affecting, because they had exhibited so great a capacity for Christian instruction, and because their whole history places in so strong a light, the fact, that the *vices* of the white man, his *rapacity, deceit and cruelty*, have exiled the red man from his country, from his native soil and heritage, and irrespective of good or evil on his part, have nearly supplanted him from the face of the earth.

From the execution of the Act of the Colonial Government before referred to, it became impossible of course for the Moravians to continue their labors among the heathen within the Province of New York. And its effects were most disastrous upon the Missions in Connecticut, and caused their final abandonment, for fields where the devoted missionaries might enjoy the freedom of religious liberty, and the opportunity to carry on their self-denying labors, without the restraint of penal laws, and without the petty annoyance of a government nominally free, but in this case, at least, practically tyrannical and unjust.

The hostility to Jesuit influence which so strongly appears in this history of the Moravians at Shekomeko, was in itself better founded, had its direction been intelligent, and uninfluenced by those who cared less for the Jesuits than to serve their own private purposes and ends. The Jesuits were forever plotting against the Government, and exciting the animosity of the Indians against the English Colonies. The old French war was itself the work of the Jesuits. And the Indian hordes themselves which gave so terrible an aspect to that war, were generally led on by Romish Jesuits disguised in the garb of Indians. And to them was mainly due the terrible ferocity by which that war was so strikingly characterized.

The Colonial Government, as well as that of the mother country, had for a long time been aware of this fact. And hence by the provincial laws, not only a known Jesuit, but any man suspected of being a Jesuit, was put upon his trial, and if convicted, was banished from the colony of New York on pain of perpetual imprisonment, and in case of escape from prison, of death.

To such as are not familiar with the infamous political intrigues and wholesale treachery of the minions of Rome, and especially of the Order of Jesuits, so stringent a law may seem too severe, and may seem to partake of a persecuting character. But it must be observed that it was aimed at them, not as members of a Christian Society as such, but as necessarily by the principles which they had adopted and the oaths by which they were bound, *traitors* and *spies* in the country, whose leading purpose was the subversion of every Protestant government, and the bringing in of the dominant power of Rome. And as opportunity offered the vile spirit of these malignant principles and oaths, have always been carried out in practice in every treacherous and treasonable form, even to the extent of overthrowing governments, and of deposing kings, and declaring their subjects absolved from their allegiance, thereby inculcating as a sacred duty, upon all members of the Church of Rome, wholesale treason, murder, and rebellion.

Thus in England, to say nothing of the other governments of Europe, King John in 1210, King Henry VIII, in 1538, Queen Elizabeth in 1569, Charles I, in 1643, and finally George II, in 1729, about fifteen years previous to the expulsion of the Moravians from Shekomeko, were anathematized, and deposed, and their subjects declared absolved from their allegiance by the Popes of Rome.*

And it is matter of authentic history, that in the troublous times of Charles I, and Queen Elizabeth, many of the most turbulent and disorganizing of the Puritan preachers were Jesuits in disguise, and in the pay of the Pope.

The law, then, against the Jesuits, was at least justifiable, if not expedient, and demanded by the necessity of the case. The great misfortune was that it should have been used for a purpose for which it was not intended, or to gratify the malice or allay the fears of those who would at all events drive the harmless Moravians from

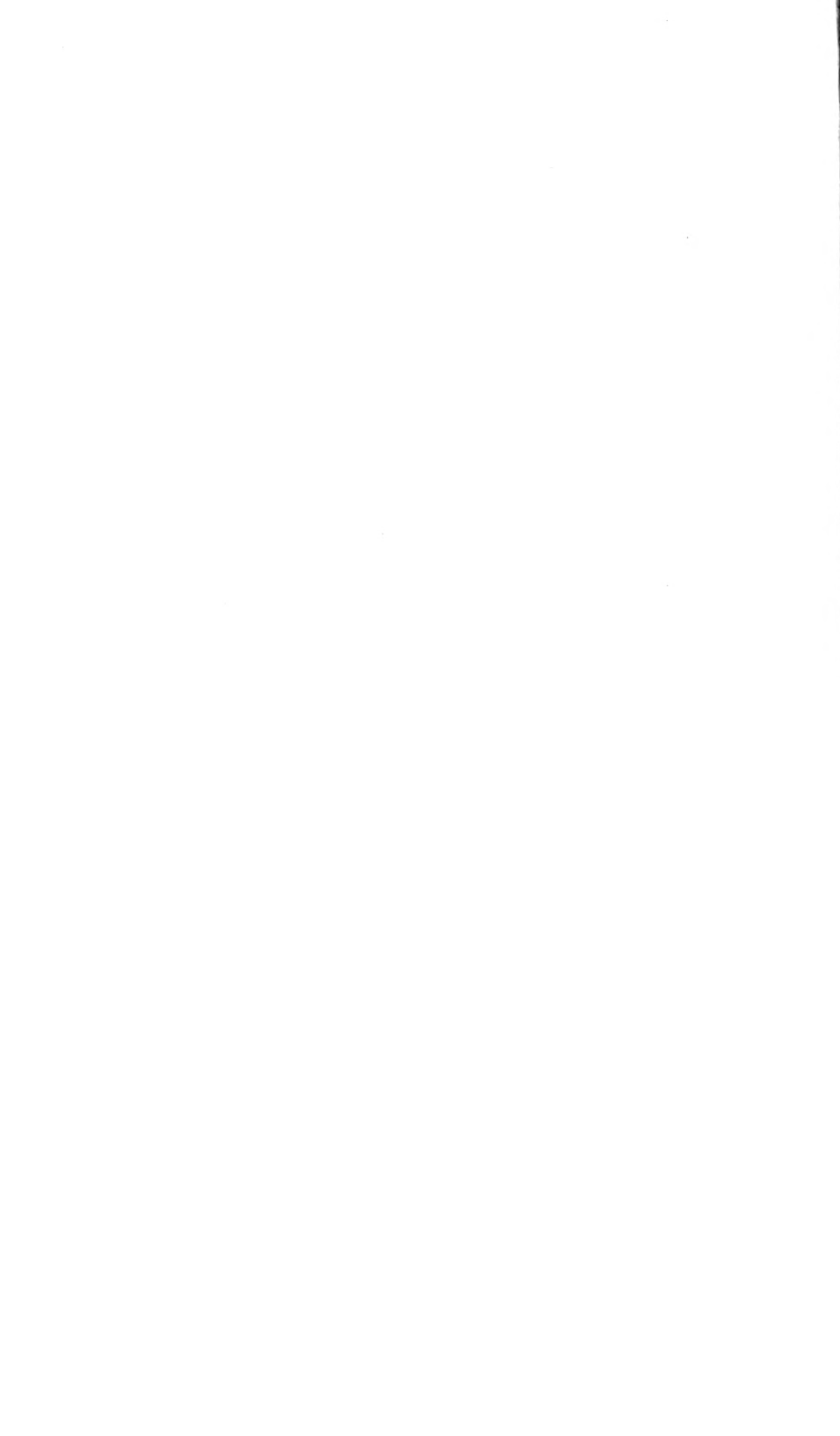
*Church Review, Vol. V., No. 4. Art. III.

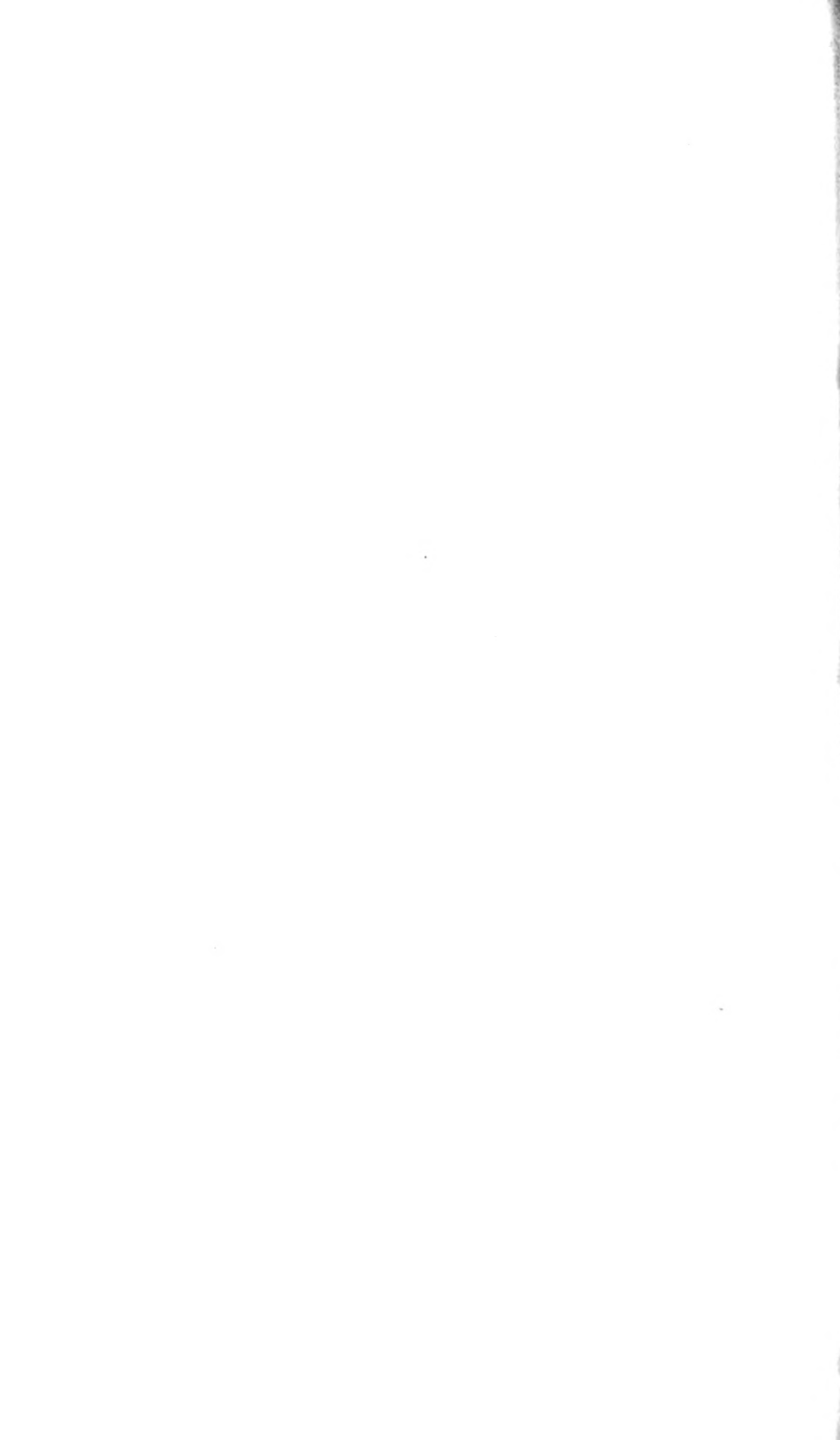
the country, without regard to the purity of their purpose, or the righteousness of their cause ; and the greater misfortune still that it should have led to the passage of another law against the Moravians by name, of the most odious, unjust, and persecuting character

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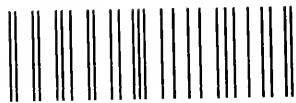
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