

A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF:  
THE DENOMINATIONAL ANTAGONISMS OF THE GRAND RIVER MISSIONS.  
Richard E. Ruggle

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The story of the christian missions on the Grand River during the first half of the 19th century is one where the denominational antagonisms of the age were writ large. Despite the long association of the Mohawks, who were the largest of the Six Nations, with the Church of England, the missionaries tended to regard the indians as being, unlike the surrounding white settlers, religiously neutral. The missions, which undertook the task of providing schooling on the reserve, had more visible authority than did the churches in the neighbouring communities. Missionaries were provided with the rôle of being intercessors between white and indian communities. These factors may have combined to make the missionaries more uncompromising than usual in furthering the interests of their particular denominations.

The Church of England continued its connection with the Mohawks, and in 1784 their former missionary at Fort Hunter, New York, John Stuart, held services at the church they had built at their village some nine miles from Niagara. This land fell into American hands by the treaty of Versailles, and the government assisted them in building a new church at Brantford the following year.

When Robert Addison was appointed to Niagara, he began a program of regular visitation. Joseph Brant thought that the Indians will be better pleased with 3 or 4 visits from Mr. Addison, in the year, than to have a Residential Missionary; but Mr. Stuart's opinion is--that they are afraid of the restraint which the Continual residence of a Clergyman would necessarily lay them under, and he is verily persuaded, that occasional visits are to be considered more as matters of form, than productive of any lasting good effect.

A few years later, however, Captain Brant tried to arrange for an old friend of his, Davenport Phelps, to be ordained and live among the Mohawks. When Bishop Mountain refused to go along with the plan, Brant is reported to have said, "Very well, then I shall turn Methodist."<sup>2</sup> Addison reported what was at least as bad, that Brant seemed "determined to have a Romish Priest."<sup>3</sup> The threats seem more indicative of Brant's pique than his policy. In later years he was willing to invite a passing Baptist preacher to visit the Mohawks,<sup>4</sup> but he did not pursue his agitation for a resident cleric.

That want was not supplied until long after Joseph Brant's death, when Alvin Corry came out in 1822 at the direction of the Genesee Conference of the American Methodist Episcopal Church. When Corry wrote his autobiography, he styled himself the "First Missionary to the Six Nations..."

of British North America." The reader is a little uncertain whether he is intended to assume that the adjective "methodist" should be inserted between "first" and "missionary." Besides the Anglicans already mentioned, the American Baptists had also sent missionaries through the valley of the Grand, though they decided not to begin a work there.<sup>5</sup>

So when Torrey arrived to spend five years on the Grand, he was the first resident missionary to the Indians in Canada. But the ambiguity of his phrase is typical of the outlook of many commentators of the time: the only efforts worth noticing, they seemed to feel, were those of their own church. So Archdeacon Strachan on his 1828 visitation could speak of SPG missionaries having "been settled among them for upwards of a century,"<sup>6</sup> conveniently neglecting the absence of an SPG missionary settled among them for upwards of four decades, and neglecting also the presence of a Methodist missionary for the past few years. Even James Beaven, one of the early Anglican exponents of christian unity in Canada, confused the work of the New England Company and the SPG, and seemed unaware of the presence of two sorts of methodists as well as Baptists during his 1840 visit, when he described the work of conversion on the reserve.<sup>7</sup>

When other missionaries were acknowledged, there was no indication that they were engaged in a common endeavour. As Addison got older, Ralph Leeming from Lancaster took on the responsibility of providing Anglican services on the reserve, and started a school there. But Torrey's only mention of the Anglican work is to repeat whatever slander he has heard. The missionary, he wrote:

only visited them once or twice in a year, and after the Sabbath exercises closed in the church, it was his custom to go with the Indians to their horse-racing and card-playing, where they had plenty of the fire-water to drink, and I have been informed upon good authority, that he has often become so intoxicated as to be unable to leave the ground.<sup>8</sup>

There were a few exceptions. John West in 1826 reported to the New England Company some of the good work being done by Methodists, and won the applause of the Christian Guardian for his perceptiveness.<sup>9</sup> And the Anglican Robert Luger spoke highly of the devotion of the Baptist Richard Scott.<sup>10</sup> But these were rare exceptions, and did not involve people who were in direct competition with one another.

In the summer and fall of 1823, there took place a great melting of hearts as the Methodists undertook a revival at the extremities of the reservation (about 30 miles apart). The presiding elder of the (Upper Canada) district claimed they "did not commence this Mission professedly for the conversion of the Indians (though they were had in the view and prayers of the pious), but for the benefit of the scattered white population on the Indian lands. But, blessed be the Lord," there resulted 24 in society in one place and 4 in the other, besides whites.<sup>11</sup>

It was about this time that a prominent Mohawk chief who had been baptized in the Church of England, Thomas Davis, was converted. Two years later, in June of 1825, the Grand was visited by an Anglican travelling missionary who was shortly to become Bishop of Quebec, Charles James Stewart. Stewart noted with concern:

Methodist preachers have lately introduced themselves on the Grand River. I endeavoured to prevent their sowing the seeds of contention, and making divisions among the Indians, by exhorting the tribes, to the best of my power, to maintain and cultivate unity with our Church, which has instructed them ever since the days of Queen Anne.<sup>12</sup>

During his stay, Stewart met Davis, and their conversation is reported by Torry (who has prospectively consecrated the priest). Stewart enquired of the old chief what he had joined the Methodists, and Davis replied,

"Bishop, you know your ministers preach to Indians forty years. No see at all: all dark--no feel any good. All drink fire-waters--get drunk--all bad. But the Methodist minister come preach to Indian: he feel sorry, then glad. He put away all the fire-waters; begin to pray--be sober--work--have plenty to eat--all very happy. What you think of the Methodist religion, Bishop?"

The Bishop sat listening attentively to him, till he finished, then with a shake of his head replied, "I don't know anything about this Methodist religion." The old chief quickly replied, "You not know anything about this bible religion? I very sorry." And then warming up with the subject, he gave him such an exhortation that the Bishop was glad to bid him "good day," at the first chance he could get.<sup>13</sup>

This conversation, Torry alleges, prompted the sending of a resident Anglican missionary at long last to the reserve. And though Torry may be slightly biased in his account, in the same report that Stewart worried about Methodist incursions, he also expressed hopes for the beneficial residence of a clergyman on the Grand.

Stewart was not the first to express that hope. In 1823 Thomas Morley had been appointed the SPC missionary to the Mohawks on the Grand River. Morley was the son of an English clergyman (and the grandson of a bishop) who had taken orders in the Roman Catholic church. When he expressed a desire to return to the Church of England, "his case was investigated and he was sent to Canada...."<sup>14</sup> He went to the Grand River, where (reported Mr Addison) he "appeared much disheartened, and has been unwell since he reached his destination."<sup>15</sup> Morley became a non-resident resident missionary to the Mohawks, and removed to Chatham, where he did good work.

With an eye for a replacement for Morley, Stewart met with a council of the chiefs and "advised them to appropriate the 500 dollars they had formerly promised to contribute to the repair of the church, to the building of a parsonage; it having been lately ascertained that the church is so far decayed that it is not worthy of the expense of repair."<sup>16</sup> The chiefs agreed, and resolved to build the parsonage on 200 acres which they engaged as a glebe.

Stewart was consecrated at Lambeth on New Year's day of 1826. On his return to Canada, he arranged for William Hough to come to the Grand. Hough had come to Kingston in deacon's orders, and acted as chaplain there in 1824. The next year he succeeded Torry

and Suddard, who had been dismissed from the Gaspé, but he was "much afflicted...by a determination of blood to the head."<sup>17</sup> and his physician suggested a change of location for the sake of his health. After being admitted to priest's orders at York, he arrived at the Grand River in September 1825, where he was introduced by John Brant to an assembly of the chiefs, and great rejoicing was expressed that they at last had a minister to live among them. After some months, he ventured the following estimate of his flock:

Many, I trust, are Christians "indeed"; but far too many, I regret to say, are unworthy of the name they bear, being addicted to drunkenness in a great degree.... I am happy, however, to say, that this vice is by no means so prevalent amongst them as when I first arrived.<sup>18</sup>

According to his Methodist rival, Torry, Hough's reproofs sparked hostility rather than reform, and the Indians said to him, "We not want you to preach to us--we not have you." So discouraged was he that he called on Torry (said the latter) and wished to know how it was that we reformed the poor drunken Indians, and brought them under religious discipline. I said to him, "In order to get pagan Indians converted to God, we must go among them, visit them, eat with them, converse with them, pray with and for them, and look to God for his Spirit to accompany his truth to their hearts, then there is no difficulty in leading them to Jesus Christ, who saves them." He said he believed in being religious, and in attending to the means of grace, "but," said he, "the wonderful change of heart you speak of, I don't understand." He wished me to give him the charge of the converted Indians, while I should go among the wild ones again. "for you have such success," said he, "in converting Indians, you can soon establish another society equal to the first." This I declined doing, and he left me, and in a few months returned to England.<sup>19</sup>

Hough's only mention of the Methodists in his report was that they superintended one of the five schools on the river, "with which I do not interfere."<sup>20</sup> His health did not, however, improve; and this (rather than his failure to copy Torry's example) led him to return to England.

About that time a former artillery officer, the Reverend Robert Lusher (1793-1837) was appointed to replace him. Bishop Stewart persuaded the S.C. to support him briefly, before the New England Company assumed responsibility for the mission. The Company was non-denominational, and had invited a Baptist missionary from New Brunswick, Richard Scott, to settle with the Six Nations or at the Credit. When he arrived, Scott discovered that the Methodists were looking after the Mississaugas on the Credit and that the Six Nations were being cared for by Lusher. Not wanting to interfere with work being done by another church, he met first with Brant and Lusher, then with Governor Haidland, before deciding to start a mission on Ice Lake.

Though supported by the New England Company, Lusher quickly put an uncompromisingly Anglican stamp to the mission on the Grand. A passing Presbyterian, William Proudfoot, commented on him:

He appears to be anxious to do good not only to the Indians

but to the white people of Brantford, but his mode of doing good is in the style of the high churchman, consequently he is not a match for the Methodists who work around him.<sup>22</sup>

Lugger did not have to wait long before crossing swords. William Hess had been a schoolmaster for the SPG since 1822, receiving an annual salary of \$20. He had about 20 children under his care, and impressed both John West and George Ryerson on their visits. But he united himself "pertinaciously with the Methodists," said Bishop Stewart, "who have intruded themselves on our Indians in a manner by no means acceptable to some of them."<sup>23</sup> Thereupon Lugger desired him to discontinue teaching the school, and directed him not to draw again on the Society, except for the amount owing him; and the bishop backed up the missionary. Hess and another Grand River Mohawk, William Doxtader, went to begin a work of conversion amongst their fellows on the Bay of Quinte.<sup>24</sup>

This was an inauspicious prelude to a visit made by a number of Methodist Mohawks, led by Doxtader and Peter Jones, to Lugger in March of 1828. They asked for the privilege of holding meetings at the Mohawk church, in return for granting him a similar liberty at Salt Springs. The Anglican said he had no objection to their attending his Church for divine service, but he "considered them unqualified to preach, and consequently in danger of spreading erroneous doctrines, and causing enthusiasm and wildfire, etc." Doxtader felt compelled to warn his brethren to flee the wrath to come. After much discussion, they agreed not to interfere with one another. Peter Jones advised the Methodist Indians "not to speak evil of the Church of England, but go peaceably on in the way they thought right, and rejoice if the Church of England Minister did any good amongst the Indians."<sup>25</sup>

About this time Torry left the Grand River, to be replaced by the less-known Joseph Messmore, a young man who had been raised as a Hennonite, and converted in the Thames country. With his advent, the mission seemed to grow amazingly. His converts, said John Carroll, were "living epistles...better than all the self-eulogy in the world."<sup>26</sup> Presumably the contrast to Torry is not just one of figures, but of attitude as well--Torry's autobiography had been out ten years when Carroll wrote those lines.

After two years of having two missionaries on the Grand, the Methodists experienced a shortage of manpower, and the Grand was combined for part of 1829 with the Dumfries Circuit. The numbers reported remained high, but some of the momentum was gone. George Ryerson, who had visited the area in 1826 and reported his observations to Governor Haitland, was appointed to the circuit. In the spring of 1831 he accompanied Peter Jones to England, to collect funds for Indian missions. When he got caught up in the Irvingite movement and failed to return to Canada, he was struck from the rolls.<sup>27</sup>

Meanwhile the mission was not left unattended. In March, Case reported enthusiastically to the Christian Guardian that about thirty Mohawks and others had "been reclaimed from their drunken habits and become praying people..." At the same time Lugger was writing with disdain to the New England Company about "a sect of Methodists, termed tenters, having lately come to the Grand River; such are their extravagant actions and gestures,

that Mr. L. has thought it right not to have anything to do with them, except visiting and supplying them with medicine when sick." (Jugler was supplied by the Company with medical supplies, and acted as a doctor on the reserve.)<sup>28</sup>

The Methodists had appointed a local preacher who, Carroll admitted, "did not succeed well," and he was replaced by an American, Richard Phelps. Phelps had been discontinued from his first charge because he wanted "some of the minor graces;" but he had had experience on the Grape Island mission, and he braved the rigours of life on the Grand. He had to revive the shell of an old house near Salt Springs for a parsonage, and when he was seized with cholera at a meeting in John Brant's house, he attributed his recovery to letting Captain Brant feed him brandy-- after being suitably persuaded.<sup>29</sup>

Captain Brant had approved Jugler when, as agent for the New England Company, he reinstated a school teacher whom the Anglican cleric had dismissed. This was on the upper part of the river which, with Davis's hamlet and the parsonage at Salt Springs, was the Methodist stronghold amongst the Mohawks. The lower Mohawks objected to this challenge and petitioned the governor for a white man as agent in place of Brant, whom they accused of barring them from the council house.<sup>30</sup> The problem was avoided only when Brant died during the cholera of 1832. He was quickly buried, away from the family vault and on the west side of the church, lest the contagion spread. At the request of Brant's sisters, Phelps officiated at the funeral.

It was not just churches and schools over which people disagreed. In 1831 Peter Jones and (George?) Ryerson had applied to the New England Company for a grant towards a saw mill near Salt Springs, under the direction of Moses Walker and other Indian chiefs. The Company authorized a grant of £100 "upon condition that such mill should be for the use of the Indians generally, and not exclusively for Methodists." Jugler reported that the Methodists refused the offer "with condition annexed," and suggested that the Company build another mill elsewhere.<sup>31</sup>

Walker seems to have been a prominent man: when the council of chiefs handed over their lands in trust to the government, to prevent further intrusions by whites, his name headed the list of signatures to the treaty.<sup>32</sup> When he was dying in 1848, he sent a message to the Methodist minister, Rowley Hewland, that he wished him to attend to his funeral. With the agreement of the widow and family, the place and time of interment were set. But some of the family made other arrangements with the two Anglican ministers, Abraham Hellen and Adam Elliott. When the body was being taken from Walker's home the five or six miles to the graveyard, the group had to pass the Anglican church. "Then opposite the door of the said house, they were ordered to stop. The coffin...was unconspicuously taken out of their hands and, to their great surprise and mortification was conveyed by other hands into the aforementioned place of worship and the funeral service of the Church of England was performed by Messrs. Hellen and Elliott."<sup>33</sup>

The grant for Walker's saw mill had been turned down during the time of Richard Phelps. He seems to have had his share of difficulties, for during his time there, Jugler was speaking of "the prospect he then had of a union between the Church and the Methodist Indians...."<sup>34</sup> By union he meant (as Anglicans so often have meant) absorption. He had selected from the most

nious chiefs indiscriminately (that is, regardless of whether they were Anglican or Methodist) a number of counsellors and catechists to be employed as native preachers. Uncertain what the attitude of the New England Company would be to his scheme, he was willing to pay the catechists \$2000 a year from his own pocket until the Company's wishes were known. The counsellors would contribute their services for the honour it brought them. With Brant dead and a white (William Richardson) appointed as the Company's lay agent, Luzzar seems to have felt that he could seize the initiative in asserting the Company's (and the Church of England's) supremacy on the reserve. And he seemed to have some success: in February 1833 he reported that every chief who from late disputes had left the church had now returned.

Messmore, who had previously had such success on the Grand, was reappointed to the circuit, and Luzzar seems to have forgotten his plan. Messmore introduced a young Englishman, John Douse, to work on the reserve. Douse was one of a party of six who had just come to Upper Canada at the request of the Canadian Conference, and he viewed the mission through the eyes of a newcomer. "Methodism," he ventured, "has got pretty good hold of the population in this colony generally, but it is rude, and, like the country, requires a good deal of improvement." Though religion had made the Mohawks sober and prosperous, he saw them as haughty, and he blamed the slow progress of christianity amongst other tribes like the Onondagas partly on their prejudice against the converted Mohawks. He was disconcerted by the excitement and crying that went on during prayer--whether this was typical of Indian services or of Canadian revivals is not certain. But he can report in a matter-of-fact way that about 150 attend the Methodist services and about twice that number go to the Church of England.<sup>35</sup> Jealousy seemed to disappear for a while, though in a few years there was to be a more agonizing rivalry.

In 1840 the union between Canadian and English Wesleyans was dissolved. The father of Methodist missions to the Indians, William Case, stayed with the English conference, while Peter Jones, who had charge of the Credit Mission, was to visit all the Indian missions. After some uncertainty on the Grand,<sup>36</sup> Kennedy Creighton was appointed there. Creighton was a native of Northern Ireland, where he had studied with the intention of becoming a Presbyterian minister. On coming to Canada he was converted, and travelled with the Yanites for a while, before coming into the Canada Conference. Now he was sensitive to division, here to the division caused by the "so-called British Missionaries," who had attracted a few of their Indians, though most had returned. These "so-called British Missionaries" were the British Wesleyans, who maintained a church in Brantford and considered the Grand River part of their circuit. They included another Irishman, Henry Byers (whose education and talents Carroll thought were limited),<sup>37</sup> then Thomas Fawcett. The latter was a short, dark Yorkshireman who held the Brantford appointment from 1844 to 1846, and who later returned to the Grand for three years before being killed in an accident on the Great Western Railway.<sup>38</sup>

There had always been a lot of movement on the reserve,<sup>39</sup> and one of the major shifts in population was from the north to the south side of the river. The shift was particularly vexing to the Canadian Methodists, whose mission was on the north. What

made it almost unbearable was that the British Wesleyans had a log chapel on the south. In 1843, however, there was no school on that side, so the Canadians moved theirs over. They must have set a good example, for in a few weeks the agent of the New Brunswick Company commenced another school immediately in the rear of them. The despondent missionary, Hamilton Biggar, reported:

We had no desire to compete with one who had such ample resources at command; nor were we jealous by whom the children of the Indians should be instructed....<sup>40</sup>

The school was moved back, and served the white as well as the Indian population. So great was the influx of whites that in 1845 the Indians surrendered to the government the land on which the mission was located. Most of the Indians by then resided on the south side, and Biggar procured ground there to join them. Then "to our surprise, the bounds of the Indian reservation, which we had supposed permanently fixed, became unsettled...." He does not say just how they became unsettled, but the effect was to delay their acquisition of land.

Though they seemed to keep the majority of their Indians, the Canadian Methodists were very sensitive to the work of the British Wesleyans. "The astonishing efforts made to proselyte these simple sheep of the forest," complained Hamilton Biggar, "to me appear...dishonourable...." But he was hopeful of a speedy termination of the conflict. His hopes were disappointed, and the next year he reported, "Bectarianism prevails," and expressed his pain at the continued jarring. When he was away to a missionary meeting, his rival decided to do a little missionary work himself, and "got up a Camp-meeting, usurping a piece of their neighbouring vineyard." Finally a reunion was effected in 1847, and the chapel on the north side of the river was abandoned.<sup>42</sup>

While the Methodists were fighting amongst themselves, the Anglicans were having trouble on their Muscarora mission. Some of the Indian lay leaders sought increasing recognition of their importance. They wanted to be the first to partake of communion, and one suggested they should kneel around the Lord's table to communicate. One, who had been attached to the Methodists, wished to exhort from the pulpit. When this was denied to them, a division took place. One of the leaders had belonged to the Baptists when he dwelt in the United States, and the splinter group on the Grand now united themselves to the Baptist church. They included three chiefs and ~~twenty-five~~ warriors, and the chiefs found themselves deposed from their office.

Since this paper has described only the relations between the various missions on the Grand River, it has passed by much of the good work--both religious and secular--done by those missions. The white man has sometimes been accused of bringing division into an otherwise harmonious Indian society. Often here, however, he seems merely to have blessed the divisions that already existed, and given them a religious cloak. In doing so, the missionaries frustrated their primary goal of conversion. They devoted so much energy to trying to reap where others had sown, that little energy was left to prepare new ground on which to sow the seeds of the gospel.



- 1 Report of a letter from Stuart to the SPG, 10 October 1793,  
in "The Rev. Robert Addison," Ontario Historical Society  
2 Papers and Reports, XIX (1922), p. 175.
- 3 Ibid., p. 178.
- 4 Quoted in Charles M. Johnston, The Valley of the Six  
Nations (Toronto 1964), p. 242.
- 5 Stuart Ivison and Fred Rosser, The Baptists in Upper and  
Lower Canada before 1820 (Toronto 1956), p. 47.
- 6 Cf. Mrs D.C. Brown, Memoir of the late Rev. Lemuel Covell....  
(Brandon, Vt, 1839), passim.
- 7 Ernest Hawkins, Annals of the Diocese of Toronto (London  
1848), p. 111.
- 8 James Beven, Recreations of a Long Vacation.... (London  
and Toronto 1845), pp. 30-55.
- 9 Wm. Hosmer (ed.), Autobiography of Rev. Alvin Torry (Auburn  
1861), pp. 59-60.
- 10 Johnston, op. cit., pp. 253-254; Christian Guardian,  
New England Company report, 1840, p. 6 (letter of 3 July 1831).
- 11 Letter in the Methodist Magazine, New York (November 1823)  
quoted in John Carroll, Case, and His Contemporaries (5 vols.  
Toronto 1867-1877), II, p. 444.
- 12 SPG report for 1825, p. 123.
- 13 Torry, Autobiography, p. 94.
- 14 T.R. Millman, The Life of... Charles James Stewart (London  
1953), p. 211.
- 15 "The Rev. Robert Addison," Papers and Records of the Ontario  
Historical Society, XIX (1922), p. 180 (letter of 1 July 1824).
- 16 Hawkins, Annals, p. 69. The New England Company later did  
repair the church, though at greater expense than they anti-  
cipated.
- 17 SPG report for 1827, p. 173.
- 18 Ibid., p. 174.
- 19 Torry, Autobiography, pp. 95-96.
- 20 SPG report for 1827, p. 175.
- 21 NEC report, 1829, p. 6.
- 22 "The Froudfoot Papers," Transactions, London and Middlesex  
Historical Society (1922), pp. 54-55.
- 23 SPG report for 1828, p. 122.
- 24 Carroll, Case, III, p. 187. Carroll describes a visit by  
William Case and Peter Jones to the Bay of Quinte in 1826:  
they "started for the Mohawk settlement, but met opposition  
to their opening their evangelizing efforts at that time  
there, where religious service was maintained under the aus-  
pices of the Church of England. This rebuff led them to  
turn to those who were heathen indeed." Ibid., p. 21.
- 25 Peter Jones, Life and Journals.... (Toronto 1860), pp. 116-  
117.
- 26 Carroll, Case, III, pp. 150-151.
- 27 "George Ryerson to Sir Peregrine Haitland, 9 June 1825,"  
Ontario History, XLIV (1952), pp. 24-29; Carroll, Case, III,  
p. 204. George Ryerson had helped tutor Peter Jones in  
English. He eventually became a minister of the Catholic  
Apostolic Church in Toronto.
- 28 Christian Guardian, 17 March 1831; NEC report, 1832, pp.  
19-20 (letter of 10 March 1831).
- 29 Carroll, Case, III, pp. 81-82, 107, 202, 330, 333.
- 30 Elizabeth Graham, Medicine Man to Missionary (Toronto 1975),  
p. 45.

- 31 NEC report, 1840.
- 32 Johnston, Valley of the Six Nations, p. 192.
- 33 Missionary Society of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada report, 1848, p. xii.
- 34 NEC report, 1836, p. 10 (letter of 1 January 1833).
- 35 A.J. Clarke, "Earliest Missionary Letters of Rev. John Douse," Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records, XXVIII (1932), pp. 41-46.
- 36 Carroll, Case, IV, pp. 320-321.
- 37 Ibid., p. 150.
- 38 George H. Cornish, Hand-book of Canadian Methodism (Toronto 1867), p. 27; Carroll, Case, III, p. 38<sup>n</sup>.
- 39 The first settlement was along the clear banks of the river. And though Brant chose white farmers to settle among the Indians as models, though the New England Company bought agricultural implements to lend out to them, and though the Methodists gave some the sobriety to fence the farms and sow the fields (Christian Guardian, 28 May 1831), they did not quickly take to agriculture. Partly this was because they had no secure tenure for the land they worked. Other factors led them to continue their limited nomadic existence. When dams were built near the mouth of the river, to obtain a feeder for the Welland canal, a number of families found their lands flooded (NEC report, 1832, letter of 14 October 1830). The Company school for the Oneidas was discontinued in 1837 when the Indians moved into the woods to be closer to fuel (NEC report, 1840, p. 28). One group who were hired of the various attempts to proselytize them even petitioned the government for a remote piece of land where they could be left alone by the Christians. The removal of whites in the late 1840's caused further disruptions, as Indians reclaimed lands that had been usurped.
- 40 Missionary Society of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada report, 1844, p. ix.
- 41 Ibid., 1846, p. xiv.
- 42 Ibid., 1844, pp. viii, ix; 1845, p. xiv.