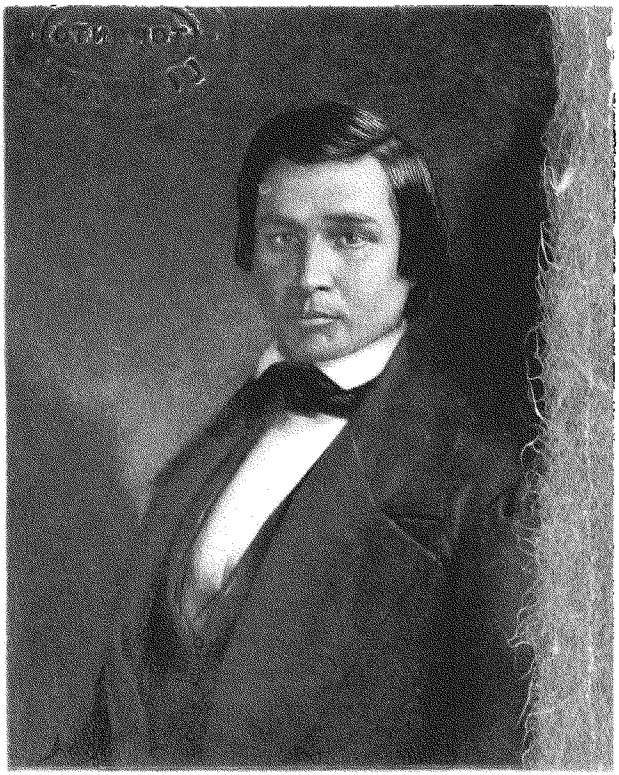
THE OJIBWAY CONQUEST.



ENGRAVED BY T.B.WELCH, FROM A DAGUERREOTYPE BY McLEES & GERMON,

GEORGE COPWAY.

OJIBWA NATION.

THE

OJIBWAY CONQUEST,

A TALE OF THE NORTHWEST.

BY

KAH-GE-GA-GAH-BOWH,

OR,

G. COPWAY, CHIEF OF THE OJIBWAY NATION.

NEW YORK:

PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR BY

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1850.

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THIS SHORT SKETCH

OF THE

BRAVERY AND PROWESS

OF THE

OJIBWAY NATION,

IS MOST

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED TO

COL. T. L. McKINNEY,

BY HIS FRIEND

K

NOTE TO THE READER.

Of all the numerous and populous tribes of Indians found inhabiting the northern part of this continent, at the time of its discovery, the Sioux and Ojibways alone retain anything like their original character.

Of these two tribes, or nations, the Ojibways inhabit principally the mountainous country about Lake Superior, extending south to the plains of Illinois or Wisconsin, and on the west bordering on that of the Sioux, between whom and they have had a bloody warfare. The Mississippi valley now forms a common boundary, with the exception of the upper or the head of the great river.

It is a well-known fact, known by all who have travelled among them, or who are conversant with

their past history, and, as traditions transmitted to the present races indicates, that all the country lying south and west of the head of Lake Superior, once belonged to the Sioux. By a constant warfare, carried on for a great many years, and a succession of misfortunes and defeats, the Sioux were at length compelled to abandon, to their more fortunate enemies, all of their possessions east of the Mississippi river, and even a not inconsiderable portion on the west of its more northern sources. Tradition says that the last decisive battle was fought near the islands of the south-west end of the Superior, known as the "Apostle Islands," on a point where La Point now stands. It is on this circumstance that the following tale is founded.

This is given in a form which may be interesting to some, who otherwise might not be interested in the nation,—whose ever kind intercourse with the pale faces has ever been apparent. None who have lived any length of time among us, could but have observed the manner of relating historical narrations of by-gone days to the children, as the Ojibways do.

I am very glad to think that justice has been done

to them by many writers, in their tales, and the peculiar romance which belong to them.

A residence of Teba-koo-ne-wa-we-ne-neh, in the remote west, originated the tale which is now presented to the public.

KAH-GE-GA-GAH-BOWH,

Ojibway Nation.

NEW YORK, *April* 25, 1850.

TO ELIZA ——.

I HAVE no words to tell the loveliness
Which breathes o'er thy fair form; then how much less
The bright, the pure, the beautiful, the blest,
Which wake their harmony within thy breast.
When after weary wanderings by wood,
And lake, and stream, and mountain wilds, I stood
Upon thy island home, thy guileless heart
A healing welcome gave. When forced to part,
And the frail bark, that o'er the waters bore
Me on my way at last from thy loved shore,
Receded in the distance from thy view,
Thy lovely hand waved a most sweet adieu.
Fair daughter! accept this tribute of a breast,
Rich in thy smiles, hath been so richly blest.

THE OJIBWAY CONQUEST.

THE ST. LOUIS.

THERE is a stream that hath its rise
Beneath the veil of northern skies,
Where frosts, and snows eternal meet
In wild array the wanderer's feet,
And all, above, beneath, around,
Is fast in icy fetters bound;
A gloomy, wild, a dreary waste
As ever the eye of man embraced;
Where shrub,—if shrub perchance be there,
Blooms not as elsewhere, fresh and fair;
But stinted, bare, and small of growth,
It nestles to the earth as loath
To spread its branches where the breeze

Which passes, kisses but to freeze ;
And if a flower should rear its head
From such inhospitable bed,
When thawing snows may yield a day
To summer sun's resistless sway,
It is a flower which doth not blight (1)
By frosts that clothe its leaves in white,
But smiles e'en from its bed of snow.
Like Hope upon the lap of Woe.
The reindeer there, roams fleet and free,
And men as wild and fleet as he,—
Though small in size, of iron mould,—
No fear of storms,—no thought of cold,—
With limbs unchilled, unslackened pace,
They fleetly follow in the chase,
From dawn till twilight paints the west, (2)
Without a moment lent to rest,—
Then stretched at length upon the snows,
Till morn they find a sweet repose.
Ah ! little knows the child of ease,—
Whom everything is culled to please,
To whose convenience every shore,
From North and South must yield its store,

And o'er whose well protected form
There never beats the freezing storm,—
Ah! little knows he of the woes
Which gather round the life of those
Who live, in nature's rudest mood,
In these deep haunts of solitude,—
For though the tempest's power hath wrought,
To their bold minds, with danger fraught,
Though youth and manhood, and old age
Succeed in their accustomed stage,
The body bared to every wind,—
The chase that leaves the deer behind,—
The frequent want, the frequent fast,
Break up life's healthful flow at last,
And leave a wreck 'tis dread to see,
Of what was once so bold and free.

II.

THE STREAM.

"Thou fair St. Louis! such the scene [3]
From which thy waters flow;
But different far the land of green
To which from thence they go,—
For many a long, long mile they speed,
Through fairer, brighter lands,
Tranquil and free like a noble steed
Unchecked by rider's hands;
From their far source to where they pour
Into bright Superior's side,
All is wild nature on thy shore,—
Man hath not curbed thy tide;—
But on thou flowest in thy might
Untainted as when God
First called thee sparkling unto light,
At his creative nod.

The vale through which thy waters sweep,—
The forest shade, the craggy steep,—
The cataract whose thunder fills
The echoes of an hundred hills,
The deep ravine, the precious mine,
Whose ores beneath thy current shine,
Such is the path thy waters take,
Ere lost within the Ocean Lake.
O! often on thy limpid stream,
Hid from the noon tide's sultry beam,
By trees, whose giant branches cast
A deep shade o'er me as I passed,
Hath my light bark now danced along
To music of some carolled song,—
Or floating, like the lightest bird,
It only with the current stirred,
While I have passed hour after hour,
Beneath the scene's enchanting power,—
The sweetest perfume on the air
From thousand wild flowers growing there,—
And colors of the brightest hue
On every side that met the view;
The wild rose, with its sweets beguiling

Along the shore so brightly smiling,
Whose petals falling on the wave,
Their own hue to the current gave ;—
The mellow light of different dyes
Which came from forest shaded skies ;—
The stillness, over all that dwelt,
So deep it could almost be felt ;—
All these have held me many a day
A willing captive to their sway.
O, who that has a heart to feel,
Would barter one such hour as this,
For all the gay world can reveal,
Or all it ever knew of bliss !
Pleasures ! in vain the precious gem
Ye seek in fashion's heartless throng,—
Ask those who seek there, ask them
Who sought the floating phantom long.
There's not a joy that throng can give,
Which does not cost a pang more deep ;
There's not a pleasure it bids live,
But lulls some virtue into sleep.

III.

THE DANCE.

Many a year has passed away
Since at the close of summer's day
Upon a green and level side
Which overlooks St. Louis' tide
A noble band of warriors stood
Who roam at will this solitude.
The bow, the spear, the barbed dart,
Which errs not pointed at the heart,
The paint in earnest colors spread,
Not for maid's love, but foeman's dread,
The plumes which in their raven hair
Waved graceful at each breath of air,—
The trophies in their battles taken,
When foeman's prowess had been shaken,—

Each warrior there, was decked with these, (4)
Profuse as summer decks the trees.
The foremost of this hero band
A standard carried in his hand,
Which from its waving top displayed
A flag most curiously made
From feathers of the wild bird's wing, (5)
Of every shade of coloring.
He was a youth, in whom combined
All that was bright, in form and mind;
The noble forehead, broad and high,
The soul that shone within his eye,
The thoughts which o'er his features played
With quick and ever varying shade,
The limbs where strength was seen to dwell
In every full and graceful swell,
Distinguished him as one of those
Where nature's fairest gifts repose,—
ME-GI-SI,* such the name he bore,
The Eagle of the Lonely Shore,
And as he planted in the ground
That pinion's shaft amid the sound

* Name of the eagle.—OJIBWAY LANGUAGE.

Of drum, and song, and echoing shout, (6)
He looked like Mars himself come out
To take, as in the days of yore,
The van upon the field of gore.
Around this shaft with measured pace
Each warrior found a ready place,
And soon the circling folds advance
And mingling in the wild war-dance,
While ever and anon a loud
And piercing whoop rose from the crowd,
Sending its accents, shrill and clear,
In answering echoes far and near;—
And when they died in air away,
Each warrior in that dread array
Stood like a statue planted deep,
So still and firm their track they keep;
While at each pause a brave advanced
Within the ring, then round him glanced,
And in rude eloquence portrayed
The havoc he in war had made,
The feats of bravery he had done, (7)
The scalps from slaughtered victims won,
As well of fallen warrior bold,

As wife and child, of these he told,
And as he held them out to view,
Some of them yet of fresh blood hue,
And raised the war whoop loud and high,
With swelling breast and flashing eye,
He seemed again amid the strife
With which his tale had been so rife—
That morn had pealed the rolling drum
Amid the cry "They come! They come!
The Sioux! The Sioux!" And at the sound,
Each warrior's foot was on the ground,
And knife to knife, and breast to breast,
The doubtful strife they long contest,—
They fought as though their blood were water,
Resumed again when ceased the slaughter,
They fought like men whose deadly hate
Nothing but death could satiate.
The Sioux at length were forced to yield
And leave to foe a hard-earned field—
Some fled and some were captive led,
Better to have been with the dead,—
Better by far, for though to-night
They have from death a brief respite,

They're not deceived, for well they know
To-morrow comes the fatal blow,
It comes with all the cruel art
Hate can invent to wring the heart,
When should it quail or yield to fear,
They die without a pitying tear,—
They die and meet the recreant's end,
Despised alike by foe and friend.

IV.

THE WEN DI GO.

The dance is o'er—the revel past,
And of that savage host the last
Hath thrown himself upon the ground
And his accustomed slumber found.
Close by their side the captives slept,
And watch or guard there none was kept,
For hand and foot securely tied,
Vain were the effort, had they tried,
To shake from off their limbs the thong
Which bound them in its folds so strong;
Vain, did I say;—no, one was there,
Who, though the bands he knew to wear,
While eye of foe was on him bent,—
And to his skill a caution lent,—

When watchful eyes were sunk to rest,
And measured breathings heaved the breast,
Could tear those shackles from his flesh,
As easy as the spider's mesh. (8)
The frosts of many winters sped
Had left their traces upon his head,—
His life, which passed in constant wars,
Had marked him with a thousand scars,–
But every iron muscle told
That vigor had not yet grown old.
He might have lost youth's spring and grace,
But strength had well supplied their place.
Whether by force or magic spell
He burst his shackles, none could tell,
Yet never, but for one brief hour,
Had they upon his limbs a power.
Among his native brethren famed
For many years he had been named
For feats of strength and wondrous art,—
The WEN DI GO OF ICY HEART. (9)
In the day's strife of ancient foes,
To which this night had brought a close,
His heavy blows, which fell like rain,

Had worked his way with heaps of slain.
Through yielding ranks he held his place,
Till like a rock at whose firm base
The ocean breaks in murmurs hoarse,
ME-GI-SI checked his onward course.

As springs the tiger on his prey
When pressed by hunger, so sprang they;—
Reckless of all that might oppose,
They rushed upon each others blows,
And grappled with a force they feel
To which the grasp of vice of steel
Would be an infant's touch. The knife
Then flashes quick in deadly strife.
They fought as though on them alone
The fortunes of the day were thrown.
They fought as if they proudly felt
On no mean foe their blows were dealt.
Each nerve to its last tension wrought—
Like meeting thunder-bolts they fought
The WEN DI GO'S superior strength
O'ercame youth's suppleness at length,
And while ME-GI-SI freely bleeds,
He of the icy heart succeeds;

His blade is raised to strike the blow,
The last he need to strike, when lo!
His threatening arm all sudden stops,
And down as by a palsy drops;
He stood a moment fixed and still,
Then yielded at ME-GI-SI's will;
And captive now and captor keeping
Side by side are calmly sleeping.

Midnight had passed, and there they lay
In rest unbroke, that warrior band;—
The powerful conflict of the day
Had now relaxed each iron hand.
The moon, too, now had sunk to rest
Behind the hills which skirt the west,
And damp mists from the river rose,
And o'er the banks in circles close.
A silence deep was over all
Except the noisy waterfall,
That, indistinct by distance, fell
Alternately in ebb and swell,
When hush! a careful hand is pressed
Upon the brave ME-GI-SI's breast.
The touch awoke him quick as thought;

He sprang upon his feet and caught
Within one hand his ready blade,
The other on the foeman laid ;
But when he saw in what calm mood
The WEN-DI-GO before him stood,
He did not strike, but for a space
They looked within each other's face,—
ME-GI-SI with a blended feeling
Of awe and wonder o'er him stealing,
And which he could not all conceal
By the dim light the stars reveal,—
Sternness and dignity alone
Upon the other's features shone.
The WEN-DI-GO the silence broke,
As scarce above his breath he spoke,
" Youth are you brave ! Then follow me ;" (10)
Thus saying, turning carefully,
And with a step that had no sound,
To wake the foemen sleeping round,
He passed—and striding on before,
Pursued the winding trail that bore
Through wild grass of a growth most rank
Along the river's sloping bank.

ME-GI-SI for a moment cast
His eyes upon him as he passed,—
Irresolute then quickly sped
Along the track the other led,
And now by the dim starlight they
Together hold their silent way.

V.

THE CAVE.

A LEAGUE was passed, yet on they went,—
Whate'er their thoughts, they had no vent;
But mute they still their way pursued,
Deeper within the solitude.

At length the youth impatient grown,
Paused and exclaimed in no slight tone—
"That I am brave no longer thou
Canst doubt from what thou seest now,—
If thou hadst not that lesson learned
By yesterday's experience earned.
The distance now precludes all fear
Of treacherous band or listening ear,
Then tell thy wish what e'er it be,
Thou'll find no coward heart in me,—

Speak ! or this knife may shame to wear
Another sheath than that I bear."
" Peace, fool," replied the WEN-DI-GO,
As quick he turned and struck a blow
That sent the spinning blade so well
They could not hear it where it fell.
" Check thy hot blood, nor deem that I
Have brought thee here for treachery.—
Think you, had I desired your life,
Ere you awoke could not my knife
Have borne to your unconscious breast
The blow that brings eternal rest ?
I have a tale will pierce thy heart
Worse than a foeman's barbed dart,—
Doubt not, but follow me," and then
Turned and pursued the trail again,—
Nor long pursued before around
A bold and rocky point it wound,
Which sent its craggy summit high
Aloft into the dusky sky,
And terminated in a cove
Formed by the arching rocks above.
Here entered they, and on a rock,

Torn from the roof by some rude shock,
They took their seat. A wilder spot
Throughout the universe is not
As this which now their steps had found,
Than that by which they were surround.
Far, far away beneath the ground
There came a hoarse and gurgling sound
Of water into fury lashed,
As o'er some precipice 'twere dashed ;—
The owl, scared by their entrance, fled,
And screamed its notes above their head ;—
Lank wolves, whose den the cave had been,
Prowled round them as they entered in,—
While just without the cavern's door,
The waters of St. Louis roar,
As o'er the dizzy fall they flow ;
And then an hundred feet below,
With deafening sound they break and boil
In endless strife and wild turmoil.
"Here in this dark and gloomy grot,"—
The WEN-DI-GO began,—"a spot
Where oft, 'tis said, the Manitou
Unveils himself to human view.

And smiles or frowns as he discovers
Of truth or falsehood they are lovers ;—
Here let me rest while I disclose
A tale may leave us no more foes,
And the Great Spirit do by me
As I shall deal in truth with thee.

You wonder that I brought you here,
But ah! you know not half how dear
Is this wild spot to me. Strange chance
Which brings again within my glance
The scenes where long, long winters past,
When the quiet blood of youth flowed fast,
I wandered with my bow well strung
And quiver o'er my shoulders flung,
And if my arrow rightly sped
When pointed at the wild bird's head,
Whatever fortune might betide,
My merry heart was satisfied.
Here, too, in after years I roved
In fondness with the bride I loved ;—
This was our home, till that foul day
When the accursed Ojibway
Rushed down upon us, scattering death

Like Evil Spirit's poisoned breath,
And with false heart and bloody hand
Drove us from our paternal land.
Thou knowest well the hatred strong
Hath dwelt between our nations long,
And from this land where now you see
The curs'd Ojibway roving free,
Thou knowest by that hated race
The Sioux was torn till not a place
By stream or mountain now is left
Of which he hath not been bereft.
Strange chance! Upon that very steep
Where those we left so lately, sleep,
My wigwam stood. My bride as bright
As the unclouded moon at night;—
Ahpuckways from rushes wove (11)
And sung sweet notes which spake of love,—
While o'er the grass with prattling joy
Gambolled, with happy heart, our boy.
It was a bright and summer's day;—
They were alone, I was away
Upon the wild deer's track. Night fell
And I returned, but who can tell

The anguish of that hour! I came
To see my wigwam in a flame,—
My wife was slain,—the purple tide
Was oozing yet warm from her side,
But still so sweet was that faint smile
Which shone upon her face the while,
I could not deem her dead, but flung
Myself upon the ground, and clung
To her loved side, kissing away
The crimson drops of blood that lay
Sprinkled upon her pallid cheeks;
And then in wild and broken shrieks
I fondly called upon her name;—
I kissed her lips; but closed in death
Those lips from which there came no breath.
I sought my boy, but he was gone,
And I in anguish and alone,
Stood like an oak. The thunder bird
Had riven at the spirit's word. ([12])
Till that day passion's fearful blast
Had never o er my spirit passed.—
No angry strife, no withering care,
No burning curse had entered there:

My bride, my boy, they were the springs
That ever moved my spirit's wings.—
But as I stood and wept to view
Her own heart's blood, my bride bedew,
And thought upon the hated foe
Whose arm had dealt the scathing blow,
Dark thoughts within my soul found place
In strange and lightening-like embrace.
Horror and anguish, and despair
Alone at first were mingled there,
But these full soon gave place to one
Deep, burning passion, which alone
Took full possession of my breast.
Revenge! Revenge! How I caressed
The darling thought.—All else that life
Deems worthy of a mortal's strife,
Was swallowed up in this wild thirst
For vengeance on the foe accursed.
I knelt upon the turf beside
The murdered body of my bride,
And with one hand upon her head,
The other with the warm blood red,
There in the presence of the dead,

I vowed my first and latest breath
To hate, to vengeance and to death!
Winters have passed, and it is now
Long since I made that fearful vow,
But never since that fatal hour
Hath it a moment lost its power.
How well it hath been kept, let those
Who fell beneath my arm disclose.
Revenge! It is a powerful charm
To steel the heart and nerve the arm,
To give the foot unwonted speed,
And to the eye in hour of need
A lynx-like quickness; such I've proved
The passion that within me moved.
An hundred warriors hath this hand
Already sent to that far land
Where wander shadows of the dead
By the dim light Aurora shed. (13)
Thine would have been among the rest,
But that I marked upon thy breast
That which withheld my lifted head.
My bride had in our happy hours,
Marked, with the dyes of various flowers,

Such as our tribe alone employ,
Our Totem on our little boy. (14)
I saw upon thy breast that sign,—
I knew it well,—Yes! thou art mine!—
My long lost child! Thy purple veins
No foul Ojibway blood sustains.
O'er thy bold form there is no trace
Of that despised, snake-hearted race,
Who not contented our fair land
To desolate with knife and brand,
Must yet, our very sons engage,
Contest against their sires to wage.
But theirs no more, thy iron nerve;
Rather than thou that foe shouldst serve
My blade shall penetrate thy heart,
E'en though my only child thou art.
If yet a single spark remains
Of noble impulse in thy veins,
And contact with the Ojibway
Hath not extinguished the last ray
Of the proud spirit of thy sires,—
Now, ere the waning night expires,
Swear to revenge the wrongs we bear,

And hers, thy murdered mother's, swear !"
The old man ceased, and had the light
Permitted him the welcome sight,
He would have seen that haughty ire
Which lent his eye its dazzling fire,
The features of the youth reveal,
As thus he answered the appeal :—
" By the dread Monitou that dwells
Within these arched and craggy dells,—
By her whose bright and watchful eye
Was o'er me bent in infancy,
I swear !" The echoes of the word
Along the cavern's roof was heard,
And when they died away, a sigh,
Soft as when evening winds pass by,—
Sweet as the swan's expiring notes (15)
Upon the air around them floats.
" Hush," said the WEN-DI-GO ; " It is
My bride came from the bower of bliss,
In the far country of the dead,
To breathe a blessing o'er thy head.
Thou shadowy spirit, for whose sake, (16)
I live both when I sleep and wake,

Whose influence in rest and strife
Hath been the guide-star of my life,
And to revenge whose wrongs, no pains,
No torture could my hand restrain,
Delay thy flight to the bright shore,
Which waits thy coming, till once more,
As in that bitter day, I swear
For every tress of thy fair hair
Which decked thy head when laid so low
I'll pluck a scalp from that of foe.
Spirit! Let this thy sadness cheat,
Till shadows both again we meet. (17)

VI.

THE COUNCIL.

Upon a mountain whose high peak
The very heavens seems to seek
Which rises on the southern shore
And looks Superior's waters o'er,
Are gathering now the few who fled,
When yesterday so illy sped.
Though the gray dawn of morn appeared,
Ere from the cave their course they steered,
And many a long mile lay between
This place and where the strife had been,
The gathered ranks already show
Me-gi-si and the Wen-di-go.
Quickly they come and silent meet,

Without a word or look to greet,—
But each as up the steep he wound,
Threw himself mutely on the ground,
Till of that scattered band the last
Had to his place in silence passed.
No darkly agitating trace
Could be discovered in the face
Of ardent youth or furrowed age
To tell of passion's inward rage,—
But, every brow was calm and stern,
Whatever smothered fires might burn
The WEN-DI-GO, to whom the lead,
As well in council as in deed,
Had long been given as his due,
For wisdom, deep, and courage true,
Slowly arose. There was no burst
Of passion in his words at first,
But calmly over each event
That marked their recent strife he went,
And e'en his voice grew sadly mild
As his words turned upon his child
Whom the great Monitou, he said,
Had now restored as from the dead,

From which the cheering hope he drew,
Although their numbers might be few,
The Monitou was still their friend,
And would not fail them in the end,
A hallowed cause like theirs to bless
With signal and complete success.—
But when he dwelt upon the wrong
Which they had now endured so long
From the foul race of Ojibway,
And pointed to the land that lay
Far as the eye around could roam,
And told them, that was once their home,
But home from which they were expelled,
And now by hated foemen held,—
The powers which in his bosom reigned,
But which till then he had restrained,
Burst forth and like Heaven's lightning glowed,
While every working feature showed
The fearful torrent-like control
Which passion held within his soul.
Like fire when o'er the prairies rushing
Or torrents from a mountain gushing,
The impulse of his own was pressed

With light-like speed from breast to breast.
No bosom there but was on fire,
No heart which did not glow with ire;
And when he ceased, in such dread yell
Upon the air their warwhoop fell,
The wild beast from his covert fled,
The wild birds screamed above their head,
And long when from their lips it died,
It echoed down the mountain's side.

A free discussion then arose
For every warrior to propose
What to each one might seem to show
The best advantage o'er the foe.

At no great distance to the right,
And only hidden from their sight
By rocky bluffs, which ledge on ledge
Abrupt rose in the water's edge,
Within a large and quiet bay
A clustering group of islands lay.
Here scattered o'er the banks of green,
And shady groves, there might be seen
Many a lodge whose bark so white (18)
Was sending back the noonday light.

Upon these isles the Ojibway,
Since, from their homes they drove away
The conquered Sioux, had dwelt secure,
And deeming them at once a sure
And safe retreat, had gathered all
Incessant warfare did not call,
To deeds from deeds already done,
To keep the land thus foully won.
To this fair spot each thought was turned,
And every warrior's bosom burned
To win again those long-lost isles
And live within their quiet smiles.
Here then each heart resolved as soon
As reached to-morrow's sun its noon,
To strike a blow should free the land
From the accursed foemen's hand,
Or fighting till the last was slain,
Leave their hearts' blood upon the plain.

VII.

THE SACRIFICE.

THE day that dawned upon the foe,
ME-GI-SI and the WEN-DI-GO
Had left while all unconscious rest
Was reigning over every breast,
Awoke the encampment's busy hum,
And, at the sound of signal drum,
The warriors gathered round their chief,
Whose look was stern, whose words were brief.
He waved his hand, and quick as thought
A shaft of stoutest oak was brought
And planted firmly in the ground ;—
To this with wending thongs were bound
The captives whose unhappy fate,
Must gratify their captor's hate.

And where is he who always bore
The foremost honors heretofore,—
And where the noble captive he
Had led in their late victory ?
Strange that he comes not, he, whose hand
Was ever first to light the brand,
And by whom were the victors tied ;—
None ever knew the knots to slide.
Me-gi-si, favorite of all,
Why comes he not at comrades call ?—
And why lays he the rest behind,
While other hands the victories bind ?—
These are the questions rapidly
From lip to lip are heard to fly.
By the Ojibway 'tis believed
That when a mortal hath received
A vigorous and fearful fast,
And day and night in watching passed,
And who hath long withdrawn his mind
From all communion with his kind,
And hath within the forest's shade
His home with evil spirits made,
Learning from them each magic art

Which their instruction can impart,
And hath his heart darkly imbued
With all of ill, and naught of good.—
These do a fearful power instil
Beyond all merely human skill,
Freedom, at will the form to change,
The water, earth, or air to range,—
And most of all they strangely give
Desire on human flesh to live.
Thus when an hour or more is sped,
And still no trace of either fled,
They doubt not that the haughty Sioux,
With whom Me-gi-si had to do,
Was one of these, and deem full well
Their favorite by his magic fell.
The unhallowed rites no longer wait,
Their thirst for blood to satiate,
But with redoubled zeal are made,
Because unwillingly delayed.—
Nothing their vengeance could suggest
To daunt the heart or wring the breast,
But was prepared with savage art
In the dire scene to bear a part.—

The faggots at the victim's feet,
The scourge their naked flesh to beat,
The arrows of the pine well dried,
The bow to hurl them in their side,
And as the flames around them rise,
Burning to aid their agonies ;—
Tortures like these they do not lack
The victim's outward sense to rack ;—
But more tormenting far are those
Designed to wake his inward throes,—
The taunts, the gibe, the goading sneer,
The insulting charge of coward fear,
Imbecile strength the bow to bend,
And erring skill the shaft to send,
A soul which could not look on pain,
And hands which had no foeman slain,
Limbs bowed with grief and not with years,
And eyes which shone, but not with tears ;—
Such were the taunts upon them hurled,
As o'er their forms the hot blaze curled.

What sounds are those that fill the air,
Above all others echoing there,
As doth the cataract's loud roar,

The brook which murmurs at its shore,
Or thunders bursting through the sky,
The owlets hoarse and startled cry ?
It is the victim's death-song shout
Which burst from their firm bosoms out,
Casting defiance at their foes,
And mocking at the torturing throes
Their thirsty vengeance would bestow ;—
The hissing flames which round them glow
To break their courage have no power,
But as exulting as in hour
When victory hath wreathed their brow,
Is the bold shout they put forth now.
The noble deeds they have performed,
The noble thoughts their hearts have warmed,
The sunset land, so bright and fair,
Which waits to bid them welcome there ;—
These are the burden of their song
Which swells in such proud notes along.

Brave Sons of Nature ! Ye need not,
To make you at this moment what
Hath been, will be, while time succeeds,
And hearts alive to noble deeds,—

The admiration of mankind,
Ye need not in the mazes wind
Of the philosophy of schools,
To teach you the eternal rules
Of fortitude and self-control
And all, which doth exalt the soul.

Fainter and fainter,—yet still clear
That death-song falls upon the ear
Of those who dance around the fires,
Where bravery such as this expires.
At length each victim's voice is still
And vengeance now hath drank its fill.

The fires are out, the warriors gone,—
And, MO-NING-WUN-AH ere the sun
Sinks to his couch behind the west,
Their barks upon thy shores shall rest.

VIII.

THE LOVERS.

The sun had set,—the clouds which fringed
The sky were gorgeously tinged
With gold, and purple, and all dyes
Which make the summer sunset skies
So lovely, and whose rays impart
To every impulse of the heart
Such chastened, hallowed thoughts, as are
Akin to the soft light which there
Beams forth so beautifully bright,
Sweet herald of approaching night!
O'er the calm waters of the bay,
Where the Ojibway Island lay,
Those rays are glanced in many a track
To the bright clouds, which send them back

Beneath the waters where they glow,
Forming a mimic heaven below.
Oh! that such hallowed scenes as this
Should ever look on ought but bliss!
When the fond soul hath felt the power
Of this enchanting, soothing hour
To wipe out every stain which care
Or sin hath left corroding there,—
Oh! why will it again return
To drink from the polluted urn,
With which guilty pleasures allure
The bosoms thus, once, rendered pure.

This lovely scene has passed away,
And the last tints of dying day
Are fading from the western skies,—
When Mo-NING-WUN-AH, there arise
Along thy shores a voice's wail,
Whose accents through thy lovely vale
All sorrowful and plaintive spread;—
It is the wailing for the dead. (19)
When the light barks, the rest that bore,

Passed rapidly upon thy shore,
A maiden band was there to find
If brother, lover, stayed behind;
And as they found them there, or not,
With joy or grief they left the spot,—
And now when the faint twilight spreads
Its sombre veil above their heads,
The voice of mother, sister, bride,
Is mingled in the plaintive tide,
For those they may not greet again,
Who sleeps upon the battle plain.
But one was there from whose distressed
And deeply agitated breast
No wailings flowed;—she could not weep,—
Her agony was all too deep.
ME-ME, fair child of light and love! ([20])
Lovely and beautiful above
All earthly power to describe,
In the soft language of her tribe. ([21])
She had most fittingly been styled
The DOVE, so innocent and mild
The feelings nature had impressed
Upon her bright and sinless breast.

No thought which did not breathe of Heaven
Had ever to her heart been given,—
No passion angels might not own
Had ever in her dark eyes shone,—
But all was hallowed, pure and bright
As heaven's own celestial light.
The form that held that soul encased
So sinless, was the no less graced
With more that the rapt heart ere deemed
Of bright when it most fondly dreamed.
She loved with all the power of such,
To love when tones from others touch
The chords which with responsive thrill
Vibrate in their own heart until
There is no power or faculty
Within the soul, all joyously
Which doth not tremble with the weight
Of feeling which it hath in freight.
Such was the love, so pure, so deep,
Me-gi-si from its mystic sleep
Had wakened never more to rest,
To life within her gentle breast.
They loved as mortals never should—

To stake the whole life hath of good
Upon one cast, and see that fail,—
O, the sad tortures which assail
The trusting heart! and ME-ME felt
Hers with this bitter anguish melt,
When he whose smiles alone could give
All for which she would wish to live,
Came not, and as she deemed no more
Would roam with her their happy shore.

There was a sweet secluded spot,
A gentle point which slightly shot
With sloping bank into the bay,
Where often at the close of day,
Apart from those whose noisy mirth
Had in it all too much of earth
For pleasures of that hallowed kind
Which love had in their hearts enshrined,
She and ME-GI-SI passed the hours
In weaving garlands of bright flowers,
And circling with love's trembling hand
Around their brows the fragrant band,
Or breathing to each other's ear
The tender words they loved to hear,—

He with a deep and noble feeling
His passion's fervent strength revealing,—
While she with less of words perchance,
But with a bright, enrapturing glance
From her full eyes responsive turned,
To all that in his own heart burned ;
Or leaning fondly on his breast,
She sung the dying day to rest.

Now, while with melancholy swell
The dirge upon the night air fell,
She sought this spot, and, seated there,
Upon her hands she bowed her fair
And gentle face, o'er which was spread
The marble paleness of the dead.
Ah ! Me-me ! none can ever know
The full extent of that deep woe
Which wrung thy heart, until the hour
When they, like thee, have felt its power

While thus she sat, a bark appeared,
And to this spot its swift course steered.—
A moment, and its prow was fast
Upon the shore, and from it passed
A tall and noble youth, who went

With gentle steps and slowly bent
In saddened fondness by her side.
She saw him not; for sorrow's tide
Had swept across her heart until
Her senses sank beneath its chill.
But when her name he fondly spoke,
She raised her head—"ME-GI-SI" broke
In joyful accents, as she sprung
And round his neck in transport clung.
The sudden joy his presence brought
Upon her heart so overwrought,
Her consciousness fled with the shock,
And now like ivy to the rock
She lay in sweet, unconscious rest,
Entwined around her lover's breast.
And when at length her eyes unclosed
To his, on whose breast she reposed,
The look was all so mild and sweet
With which those eyes her lover's greet,
As though their light beamed from a soul
Into which Heaven's sunshine stole.
"To what a fearful weight of grief
Beloved, thou hast brought relief!"

Thus she began, "I ask not what
The reasons why thou camest not,
When others of our tribe returned,
From whom the fearful tale I learned
That thou hadst fall'n beneath the art
Of one of those of icy heart,—
Once in the power of whose dread spell
None e'er returned his fate to tell.
It is enough for my glad heart
To know that here again thou art,—
That oft in this, our loved retreat,
With gladsome hearts, we yet may meet,—
To tell o'er and o'er to thee
How very dear thou art to me,—
And thou to fold me to thy breast,
And say 'thou art in that love blest.'
O! when we meet at times like this,
It seems as though the whole of bliss
Which ever in the bright world shone,
Gathers in my poor heart alone!
To gaze, in fondness on thy brow,
And feel thy heart, as I do now,
Beneath my own so wildly beat,—

To hear thy words so soft and sweet
Call me, as oft they do, thy bride,
O ! what hath earth to give beside !
When will the war-cry cease to grieve
My heart, because it bids thee leave ;
While I an hundred times a day
Come to this lovely spot to pray,
Until it seems my heart would break
To the Great Spirit for thy sake.
Say, must thou yet again expose
Thy life among those cruel foes,
The fearful Sioux ?—but ah, love ! why
Breaks from thy bosom that deep sigh ?
Has thy heart any care ? ah, say,
And let me kiss that care away,"
She said, and with her fingers fair
She brushed away the raven hair
Which o'er his forehead clustering strayed,
And then upon his brow she laid
Her gentle lips. Me-gi-si felt
His purpose almost in him melt,
And for a moment he forgot
His sad, inexorable lot,

So sweet the thrill that kiss had sent
Through his sad heart; but when he bent
His eyes upon her lovely face,
And saw how deep and pure the trace
Of trusting love in every look,
His bosom heaved, and his soul shook
With the intensity of pain
Its breaking chords had to sustain,
As rushing thoughts again impress
The withering, blighting consciousness
That he no more upon that smile
Which had such power to beguile,
Could in the bliss of former days
Fix his full soul's adoring gaze.
Alas! he knew the dream was past,
And this fond look must be his last.
He knew that should those eyes beam yet
When he was gone, as when they met,
He could not, must not, from the sight
Receive, as he had done, delight.
He knew if yet that cheek should wear
The hallowed smiles which now were there,
The thrills of rapture they impart

Must fall upon another's heart.
If those eyes beam! If that cheek glow!
Alas! He doth too sadly know,
His presence only can awake
Those smiles which beam but for his sake,—
That he alone can give the light
Without which they will sink in night.
'Twas this which gave the deadliest sting
To all his soul was suffering.
If he alone might meet the blow,
And his heart only feel the woe,—
If on his own the blight might rest,
And leave unscathed her tender breast,
He could sustain the scathing stroke,
And firmly meet it like the oak
Whose trunk lightning indeed might break,
But whose firm roots they could not shake
But that the misery he knew
Should tear her heart asunder, too!—
O! that was torture all too deep;
He felt these thoughts in tumult sweep
Across his brain,—and when at length
A powerful effort called the strength

Into his prostrate breast again,
And he so far o'ercame its pain
As to, in broken words, relate
The tale he knew must seal their fate,
It was with accents so subdued,
In spite of all his fortitude,
As though at every word he spoke
A chord within his sad heart broke.—
"Ah! ME-ME, thou hast been and art
The sparkling dew-drop of my heart,
Beneath whose brightness I have felt
In that of love all feelings melt;—
O, 'twas a glorious dream that stole
So sweetly, purely o'er my soul:—
I did not deem that I should wake
To see my heart with that dream break.
But, ME-ME, that bright dream is fled:—
Like the cold fingers of the dead,
I feel its dead joys o'er my breast
In icy suffocation pressed.
O, what but thee and this dear spot
Would I not give could I but blot
From memory all that hath passed

Since in this bower we parted last.
I've struggled, but it is in vain;
The fire is in my heart and brain,
And will not cease its torturing strife
Until extinguished with my life.
Thou knowest the totem I have borne
Is not such as by thy tribe worn;—
That we, unknowing what its name,
Have often wondered how it came
That I alone have worn a crest
Differing so strangely from the rest.
'Tis strange no more; the battle-field
The mystery hath at length revealed,
And thy fond lover hath his sire
Among the foe whom thy tribe's ire
Hath driven from their native land,
A scattered but unconquered band.
Yes, ME-ME, I am one of those,
Thy nation's fiercest, deadliest foes,
Whom, but a moment since, so true
Thou didst well term the fearful Sioux.
Fearful they are, and will be yet,
To those who shall their path beset.

Thou knowest between this tribe of thine
And that which henceforth must be mine
Exists a hatred strong as death,
Resigned not even with their breath.
Judge, then, if they could e'en abide
To see the dove the eagle's bride.
Alas! ME-ME, it may not be,
And were it not, my love, for thee,
I could rejoice that my firm nerve
To direful vengeance yet might serve,
For her whose soft and gentle lays
Were carolled to my infant days,
But whom the Ojibway beguiled,
And robbed at once of wife and child;—
And I have sworn my soul to give
To retribution while I live;—
But short the moments that remain
Before that vow will be in vain.—
To-morrow's sun will see its beam
Flashed back in many a war-knife's gleam,
And yonder waters on whose breast
The moonbeams now so sweetly rest,
Shall drink before the day shall close,

The mingled blood of warring foes.
And I shall be amidst the strife,—
But not as erst, against the life
Of sire and kindred warrior, no,—
My arm must find more fitting foe.
Something forewarns me that my blood
Shall mingle with to-morrow's flood ;—
I feel it now within my heart,—
To-night, for the last time, we part ;
And yonder stars which shine so bright,
When they come not another night,
Will look upon my bleeding form
No longer with life's pulses warm,
And that brow, cold, and damp in death,
So lately hallowed by thy breath.
But let it come ! Why should I live
When life hath nothing now to give
But blighted hopes and vain regrets ;
And every lingering sun that sets
Adds only to the bitter store
With which the heart was charged before.
Yet O, how happy ! were it not
That this inexorable lot

Hath interposed its withering blight
Between my heart and all that's bright,—
How happy to observe each day
Beneath thy sweet smile pass away,
To feel thy warm breath on my cheek,
To see thee, love thee, hear thee speak,—
And shield thy tender heart from all
Which on it might too rudely fall.
Bright picture of our former days,
But one on which I must not gaze,—
I've braved both friends' and foemen's power
For the enjoyment of this hour,—
To bathe my soul once more in light,
Ere it sink into endless night."

He paused, and closer to his breast
The maiden's form he wildly pressed,
As if that pressure could keep under
A heart which else would burst asunder.
And there they stood, that hapless pair,
The victim each of mute despair ;—
Yet how exalted, noble, pure,
The anguish which their souls endure !—
When the full bosom swells like this

With feelings boundless, fathomless,
There's something so exalted there,
That e'en though springing from despair,
The heart would scarce desire repose
If purchased at the life of those.
Sensations vague and undefined
Had agitated ME-ME's mind
When first, ME-GI-SI's words conveyed
The destiny o'er them weighed,—
But when at length, she knew the worst,
And the full truth upon her burst,
A pang shot through her heart and brain,
But one,—and all was calm again;
But with that pang had fled all sense
Of pain or woe forever hence.
'Twas so intense no other grief
Could wake a throe, however brief,—
And then a holy calmness came,
Succeeded to the passioned flame,
Which had so brightly, till that hour,
Maintained within her breast its power.
It was a calmness which had birth
In the conviction that the earth

With all its pleasure, all its sweet,
Had nothing which could ever cheat,
Even for one brief moment's flight,
The sadness of her bosom's blight.
All tranquilly she raised her head,
Drooping like lily, o'er its bed,
And gently loosed her from the clasp
Convulsive of her lover's grasp,
And spoke with look so calm and mild
It might almost be said she smiled,
But such a smile, as one might trace
Upon the cold and marble face
Of one whose spirit had just riven
The bonds which checked its flight to heaven.—
"Me-gi-si, O how glad would I
Lay this poor body down to die,
Could it but bring again to thine
The joy that can no more be mine.
Let not thy Me-me's broken heart
One sorrow to thine own impart;
O, no, but go, forget, that we
Have ever loved so trustfully.—
Thy duty calls, then be it so,

And let no thought of me e'er throw
Across thy breast a single cloud
The sunshine of its peace to shroud.
What though this fate shall blight my powers
Like early frosts, the gladsome flowers,
And my poor body find its rest
Full soon, upon the earth's cold breast?—
My spirit still shall hover near thee,
And this, its only thought to cheer thee,
And pour most fondly into thine
The light which in itself shall shine.
Yes, go, forget that we have met,
Or if thou canst not all forget,
Think of it as a dream which stole
In night's calm hours into thy soul,
Whose memory perchance may cling
Around thy softened heart and fling
A shade of sadness which you may
Not altogether dash away,
But which thou shouldst not let control
The strength and bravery of thy soul.—
No, if thou canst not banish all,
And memory will at times recall

The gladsome hours our hearts have known
Thrilled by each other's look and tone,
There let thy fond thoughts only dwell
On this, thy ME-ME loved thee well,
And only look on those sweet hours
As thou would'st look on lovely flowers,
From which the freshness might be fled,
But which, though withered, yet would shed
Their fragrance sweet as when their hue
Was heightened by the night's soft dew.
O! let me deem that thus thy heart
Will look on me, and I can part
With one less pang from all those bright
And happy dreams which take their flight,
Till on the far-off spirit-shore
We meet again to part no more."

O, Love! How hallowed, noble, pure,
The feeling which thou dost secure
Unto the breast where thou dost deign
To institute thy perfect reign!
When touched by thee, how all the dross
Of earthly passions, which so toss
And heave their billows o'er the soul

Before it hath felt thy control,—
By thy strong alchemy expelled.
Yields up the places it hath held,
And all that finds acceptance there
Is hallowed as the breath of prayer,—
And Me-me, though despair's cold breath
Had sent the icy chill of death
Over her bosom's tender chords,
Yet even then her love found words,
She fondly hoped might interpose
A power to sooth her lover's woes.
But vain! The love which thus could make
Such sacrifices, for his sake,
Had kindled in his heart the same
Self-sacrificing, generous flame,—
And when his quick sense caught this new
And last fond proof of love so true,
And saw and felt himself how much
The purpose cost which made it such,
And gazed upon her standing there
So droopingly and yet so fair,
It was too much,—he could not brook
That quiet and heart-stricken look.

He caught her up and wildly pressed
The blighted lily to his breast,
And for a moment yielded all
His heart and soul to love's fond call,
Resolved to brave scorn, torture, death,
To save that gentle heart from scath.
Fond dreamer, up! away! away!
Death and dishonor if you stay,—
But death and honor if you go—
Away! to meet your country's foe!
A moment, and he felt it true,—
No word broke forth to say adieu,
But one long burning kiss he gave
Upon that brow he could not save,—
Then turned and wildly rushed again,
With wildered sense and maddened brain,
To where his light bark floating lay,
And o'er the waters shot his way.

IX.

THE LAST BATTLE.

'Tis noon again. The sun's warm beam
Is gleaming brightly o'er the stream,
Which, with a current calm and slow,
Bears on its breast the stealthy foe,
Within their light barks noiselessly;
Who now have paused a moment by
Its entrance to the crystal bay,
Opposed to where the islands lay.
A few brief words, to nerve their breast,
The WEN-DI-GO to each addressed,
With promises of bravery's meed,
Should they in that day's strife succeed,
And meed to warrior's heart more sweet, [22]
Which in the spirit-land should greet

Their souls, should death their path beset,
And when it came, be bravely met.
These said—his bark, whose prow displayed
A feathery pennon's varying shade,
Shot from among the rest, and led
The way around a woodland head
Which had the bay and isles concealed,—
And now before them lay revealed
The scenes whose memory around
Their warmest feelings long had wound,
And where so soon they must decide
If once again they shall abide
Within their quiet spell, or whether
They and this last hope die together.
As the last bark in that array
Came out upon the open bay
And caught the view,—a moment's pause
Ran through the whole, while each one draws
A smothered breath and drops a prayer
For the Great Spirit's guardian care ;—
Then with a shout of curses dread
To gather upon foemen's head,
By their strong arms each light bark there

Sped onwards like a thing of air,—
And should no foemen check their speed,
Short were the moments that they need
Ere they shall rest their glancing oar
Upon the nearest island's shore,
Where o'er the green and shady strand
The lodges of Ojibway stand,
Beneath whose shady folds repose,
Unconscious of approaching foes,
The chiefs and warriors, but with spear,
And bow, and war-club lying near,
Ready, upon the first alarm,
To be resumed with sturdy arm.
The foremost of the barks hath now
Almost upon the shore its prow,
When sudden from the Ojibway's rang
The war-cry's blast, and, with it sprang
Each warrior there upon his feet
With answering shout, and rushed to meet,
In strife too wild and dark for name,
The foe that thus upon them came.
Then grappled each his nearest foe,
Nor yielded either till the blow

Which drank life's latest current well,
Left him all lifeless where he fell.
But vain the strife,—though for each Sioux
There perished of his foemen two,—
There lived but two of that brave band
To track through foes their way to land.—
ME-GI-SI and the WEN-DI-GO,
Around whom fell at every blow
Victims to their resistless strength,
Had fought their bloody way at length
Upon the beach, and there they stood
Alone, unconquered, unsubdued,—
Keeping, like lions fierce, at bay
Surrounding foemen's whole array,
Or those who were upon them rushing,
In ghastly heaps around them crushing.
Maddened to see the slaughtering tide
And feel their power thus defied,—
Shame to their courage adding wing,
The Ojibways upon them spring
Like famished wolves upon the prey
That chance hath thrown within their way,
And sire and son are borne beneath,—

Their flesh an hundred weapons sheath ;
And when the rushing crowd gave place,
Within Me-gi-si's breast all trace
Of life with all its pains had fled,—
Mangled he lay among the dead !
But from beneath their raining blows
The Wen-di-go again arose,
And dashing off, as things of naught,
Those who to stop his progress sought,
One thrilling yell of scorn he gave,
Then plunged beneath the blood-dyed wave.—
They saw no more,—and whether then
His spirit passed, or if again,
Concealed by magic from the view
He living rose, none ever knew ;
Still they believe, amid the dirge
Of winter's winds and water's surge,
Or in the tempest's blasting hour,
They hear his voice and feel his power,—
And even upon summer's night,
When winds are hushed and stars are bright,
They sometimes see his shadow pass
Slowly along the moon-lit grass,—

And then with bloodless lips they tell
Of some mischance they know full well
To fall on whom the spirit's eye
Glanced angrily as it passed by.

THE REQUIEM.

THE eve that gathered o'er the water,
Yet crimson with the recent slaughter,
Came slowly, beautifully on;
And when its last faint hues were gone,
Shadowed in the embrace of night,
The moon and stars looked down as bright
As though no scenes of carnage lay
Where now their beams so sweetly stray.
Chance led at this delightful hour
A band of maidens to the bower
Where ME-ME and her lover parted
The night before so broken hearted;
And there upon a mossy bed
Lay ME-ME, silent, cold, and dead.

With the last look on lover cast,
Her gentle spirit sweetly passed,—
And now she lay in cold death sleeping,
Their watch, the wild flowers o'er her keeping,—
And, as they waved with the soft sigh
Of the night zephyrs passing by,
Wept dewy tears o'er one so fair,
Laying like blighted rose-bud there,
And, poured the fragrance of their breath
To hallow such a tristful death.
When first beheld, the maidens deemed
'Mid flowers and moonbeam's light she dreamed,
But when they gathered near and felt,
As by her side they fondly knelt,
That death's rude fingers had impressed
Their icy touch upon her breast,
Stilling each throb of bliss or pain
Beyond the power to beat again,—
A wailing, low, like sighing tone
Of winds when through the trees they moan,
While all around beside was hushed,
From their full bosoms sadly gushed.

"Heart of our hearts,—farewell, farewell,"—
Thus rose the dirge's plaintive swell,—
"Thou wast the sunbeam, spirit given,
But softened like the light of even,
Within our darkened bosoms stealing,
That kissed the buds of happy feeling,
And in the fragrant breath and hue
Of sweetest love to flowers drew.
O, what shall keep that hue so fair,—
O, what shall keep that fragrance there,—
Their warmth, and light, with thee withdrawn,
Their hue is fled, their fragrance gone.
We withered where our sister fell,—
Heart of our hearts,—farewell, farewell."

Ere the sad tones had left the ear,
An airy spirit hovering near,
Caught up again the lingering strains,
And in such music as enchains
The raptured heart in childhood's dreams,
When in some fairy land it deems
'Mid bright etherial forms, it dwells,
The requiem around them swells.

"There's a bower prepared in the land of the blest,
Where the young, and the pure, and the lovely shall rest,
Who have left the sad earth, where the tempests that rushed
O'er their sensitive bosoms, forever are hushed.

O, the heart of the dead beat too warmly for earth,—
Like a bird in the far sunny south that had birth,
But which wandered where winds from the northern sky passed,
Where it sung one sweet strain, then sank in the blast.

So the soul that once dwelt in that fair form of clay,
Over which you now weep, that it thus passed away,
Like that bird hovered near you, then went to its rest
In the sweet spirit home, in the land of the west.

Weep not that her spirit thus early hath fled,—
That spirit still lives, though the body be dead;—
It lives where its joys pass no more with a sigh,—
It lives where its happiness never shall die."

NOTES.

(1) "*It is a kind which doth not blight.*"

In the north and north-west there is a kind of flower which matures late in the fall, and still blossoms in the dead of winter. There is a strange contrast between its snowy bed and its delicate hues. In spring it dies with the snow, and again reappears in the fall.

(2) "*From dawn till twilight paints, &c.*"

The facility to endure long journeys and fatigues has long been the admiration of the people abroad. Those Indians who lived in the north and about the head waters of Lake Superior, are an active and the most energetic race. Long journeys were performed in times of war; and with little or no rest during the day of hunting. One would hardly credit the feats they can perform in the dead of winter. Over hill and down ravines, covered with snow, they make their snow-shoe track. Through the forest-world, the trees heavily ladened with snow, they seek the game; and this is done day after day through the period of life.

(3) "*Thou fair St. Louis!*"

There must ever be a peculiar interest attached to the St. Louis river, arising from the consideration that it is the proper source of that mighty chain of waters, which, after pouring their tide through more than half the extent of the western hemisphere, at last discharge themselves in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, where they mingle with and are lost in those of the Atlantic. But if it had not this fact to draw an interest around it, the character of the river itself is such as to leave an impression upon the mind of one who has glided upon its pure waters not easily to be forgotten. The variety of its scenery—the beauty of its evergreen edges—the rapid and whirling toss of its waves, and the high cliffs of rocks, where it swells its maddening roar;—all this can be seen in the St. Louis about the extreme west end of Lake Superior, and one can follow it up through its various windings, now narrow, and then widens like a lake. The scenery about the head of Lake Superior is picturesque and grand, and a little way up, farther on, dashing with impetuous fury through some narrow and rocky passes, or over falls, from whose height the beholder becomes dizzy in looking down, make the voyage one of continual excitement and delight. We might here present a more minute description of the onward windings of this river, but we forbear at present, believing none will contradict us when we say it is not less in grandeur than the scenery on the North River.

(4) "*Each warrior there was deckcd with these.*"

There is no time in which an Indian brave adorns his person with so much care as when going to war. Here the warrior lays aside the encumbering articles of dress worn at other

times, and only wears those light, and yet, often extremely ornamental, which, without confining in the least the free and easy motion of every limb, exhibits their fine forms to the best posssible advantage.

(5) "*From feathers of the wild bird's wing,*"

The feather flag is the flag which was and, in some parts, is yet used. The feathers of the rare gray eagle are knitted together over four feet long. When ready for war, this is stuck in the centre of the war-party, while now and then the standard-bearer waves it, while the rest send a piercing shout to heaven.

(6) "————————*amid the sound*
Of drum, and song, and echoing shout."

The drum is one of the principle instruments we used in time of war preparations, and at all times, and although very unmusical to finer ears in the civilized world, is by us held in great estimation. It is made by tightly stretching a piece of deer-hide over a hoop, and somewhat resembles a tamborine. The drum-stick is a piece of wood with a short cross at one end, with which the drum is beaten.

(7) "*The feats of bravery he had done.*"

At the public dances of our nation is the only place where any one can boast of bravery, and it is not expected a brave should boast at all times, but at such places, of their exploits in battle. On such occasions I have sat to listen to their bold eloquence and graphic descriptions, until my own breast irresistibly caught the passionate feelings of theirs.

(8) "*Could tear those shackles from his flesh*"

I would not like to hazard the assertion, in this enlightened age, that there is such a thing as magic or supernatural agency among the Indians, but I must confess myself unable, as all have done who have witnessed those exhibitions, to account for satisfactorily;—one of those Indians who pretends to have an intercourse with spirits, will permit himself to be bound hands and feet, then wrapped closely in a blanket or deer's hide, bound around his whole body with cords and thongs, as long and as tightly as the incredulity of any one present may see fit to continue the operation, after which he is thrown into a small lodge. He begins a low, unintelligible incantation to the gods, and increases in rapidity and loudness until he works himself up into a great pitch of seeming or real frenzy, at which time, usually three or four minutes after being put in, he opens the lodge and throws out the thongs and hides with which he was bound without a single knot being untied or fold displaced, himself sitting calm and free on the ground. Carver, in his travels, gives a curious and interesting account of an exhibition of this kind, accompanied with a prophecy, which was astonishingly fulfilled. Those who possess this art pretend that a spirit comes and relieves them from their bonds. You say this is superstition. Much of the same kind is among the pale faces. I believe the Indians had, and do have, mesmerism among them.

(9) "*The Wen-di-go of icy heart.*"

This Wen-di-go, in the idea of the Indians, is a monster, who lives in the north;—a supernatural being, who roams about the earth in search of victims, for he lives on human flesh. He is represented to be as tall as the pine trees; a

whirlwind's tread is heard around him wherever he is. Frost and cold are his companions. He is devoid of feeling. "Icy heart." It is believed men have become Wen-di-go's by a mysterious process, and if any one is supposed to become one, he is immediately dispatched. When a Wen-di-go can be killed, it is only done by men who are supposed to have a strong arm, or an array of favorites from the spirits to aid them.

([10]) "*Youth, are you a brave?*"

This is an expression we use in challenging one another when we desire to engage another in any enterprise which requires the exercise of his attribute of the mind. When any one is insulted by another, he immediately calls at the wigwam, and in looking through the lodge, asks him this question, and if he speaks in the affirmative, an appeal then is immediately made to their relative prowess. If he does not so answer, he is immediately branded as an old "woman," an appellation for all cowards, not that all women are cowards, for some deal in cow*hides* in civilized countries.

([11]) *Ahpuckways from soft rushes wove.*"

Ahpuckway is a kind of mat which is made out of the blades of the rush, vulgarly called "cattail," with great skill, for the purpose of covering the wigwams of the natives. They appear at a distance, light, and glisten before the sun. These, too, they make mats for their beds, to repose upon in the night.

([12]) "*Stood like an oak. The thunder bird*
Had riven at the spirit's word."

Our nation believe that thunder is caused by a large bird

which lives so far up in the sky as not to be visible. The noise is caused by the motion of his wings. This idea, no doubt, they received from the drumming of the pheasant, which so nearly resembles distant thunder. The lightning they imagine the opening and shutting of the bird's eye ;—and its fierceness is sometimes so fearful and keen as to ignite the object on which it falls. This happens when fire follows a stroke of lightning. Whenever lightning strikes an object, they think that the bird shoots from its eye a small round stone, which produces the effect ; and assure you that if you will dig and examine where the lightning enters the ground, this stone will be, and has been, found.

(13) " *Where wander shadows of the dead*
By the dim light aurora shed."

The Indians, unable to account for the various phenomenas of nature, have associated with most of them some curious superstition. The aurora borealis they believe shines to illuminate the pastime of the disembodied spirits, when, in the shadowy land, they gather in the chase, or mingle in the dances, with which they amuse themselves.

O-ge-chog means shadow, and when applied to man, we say, in reference to his soul, his shadow ;—the reality of such attribute they see, yet cannot feel.

(14) " *Our totem on our little boy.*"

Among the Indians each family is designated by some distinguished badge or crest, such as the figure of a swan, deer, crane, eagle, bear, otter, or moose. This emblem we call a totem. The laws relative to it are somewhat curious. It is not permitted for a male and female to intermarry whose

totem happens to be the same; they are all considered as brother and sister. In adopting or inheriting their totem among the children, the boys and girls take that of their father, and sometimes the girls can only take that of their mother. This is only true, as to the different other nations.

([15]) "*Sweet as the swan's expiring notes.*"

Though this is a common-place allusion, yet, the lakes about the country where the scenes are we speak of, are filled with wild fowl, and among which is the most graceful of all birds, the swan.

([16]) "*Thou shadowy spirit, for whose sake.*"

Like all unenlightened nations, our nation have many extremely superstitious notions. They believe the visitation of the souls of their departed friends not often to be visible with a natural body, but they hear them in some way,—by the sighing of the winds, the hum of creation, or fancy they ride on the fleecy clouds of an evening sky.

([17]) "*Till shadows both, again we meet.*"

Some of the ideas in reference to the immortality of the soul they represent under the idea of a shadow. Their explanation which they generally give of the reason why they bury their dead with weapons of hunting and war, food, and apparel, is so curious and ingenious that we cannot help relating it The Indian is asked why he does this. His reply is, that the shadow of the body has left for the distant west;—that the soul needs the shadow of these articles, and not the material. The shadow of these things serves to the soul as they did to the body while living.

([18]) "*Many a lodge, whose bark so white.*"

The lodges are made by poles stuck in the ground, and these meet at the ends, which, in meeting, lap over and are tied, and these are covered with the white birch. This kind of bark is so white that when many are seen at a distance they appear as though there were more than what is really the number.

This bark is used for almost every purpose. We cover our wigwams with it—make our canoes—vessels for water, and the dishes we used to eat out of. Fancy work-boxes are made out of this material. Our songs of war, triumphs, and traditions, are recorded on this bark.

One Indian family often have five thousand, six thousand, eight thousand, and ten thousand dishes, to gather sap from the noble trees, in the spring, and the bark holds the sugar which has been made.

([19]) "*It is the wailing for the dead.*"

The evening is always the time the friends of the deceased collect around their graves, and sing a low, wailing sound of the voice. Often, by the banks of the Mississippi, we have heard the Ojibway sing the death-song, and the voice seems to creep over the distant hills, which sound, they believe, aids the soul in travelling to the distant west. When the shadows of the red races collect from the valleys of that Happy Land, they send their echoing shouts to each other from hill to hill.

([20]) "*Me-me, fair child of light and love.*"

This is one of the most harmless of birds, which you call dove. A beautiful legend is told to the children, of this bird,

when in flocks they return from the north in the spring, in the wigwam.

([21]) "*In the soft language of her tribe.*"

Travellers have found the language of the Ojibway to be very musical, and at the same time to be one of the most noble in America. This is susceptible of expressing the nicest shade of thought by endless modifications of the verb. The language of the nation has justly been called the "Greek of America."

([22]) "*And meed to warrior's heart more sweet.*"

In the idea of the Indian, bravery is the key that unlocks the entrance to the most exalted joys of the Great West, or future state. The peaceful and Christian virtue of humanity, forgiveness, and benevolence, are powerless to open the gates of an Indian's Paradise.

Things have changed, and now it is otherwise. Once, the Indian brave adored the man who recognized him as a noble warrior; yet, however he may now admire that quality in man, it has been so refined by education, he yet loves to exhibit that manliness which exalts and ennobles man. Never will a true Indian stoop to low cunning and meanness which characterizes the higher state of pretended civilized life of other nations.

One of the greatest reasons which has made the pale face desist in his endeavors to civilize the Indian, is because he could not subdue the high state of noble independence in him, as though it was necessary that his spirit was to be subdued first, before he could be taught the noble spirit of Christian morals.