

THE CHILD'S VISION.

"Father, don't you hear the music?
How it fills my soul with joy!
And the father softly answered,
"Go to sleep, my darling boy."

But again, that voice prophetic
Broke the stillness of the night:
"Father, don't you hear the music?
See you not that vision bright?"

"Tis the Saviour's face, I know it—
Sadly sweet, divinely fair—
See! the angel hosts attend;
Hark! their music fills the air."

Then again the anxious father
Tried to soothe his wakeful child;
For he thought his wayward fancies
Made his words so strange and wild.

Ah! he little thought his loved one
Saw the bright, the heavenly band
That had come to bear his spirit
To the fair, celestial land.

But at morn, when that fond parent
Stood beside his darling's bed,
Then he understood the meaning
Of the words his son had said.

Cold and lifeless lay the body,
Out of which the soul had fled;
And the sorrow-stricken father
Wept because his son was dead!

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THE LEGEND OF EPOI.

AN AUSTRALIAN STORY.

On a day of a year long past and gone, an encampment of the numerous tribe of Epoi dotted the eastern slope of a hill not far from the winding banks of the ever-flowing Yarra Yarra.

It was a day of the year when the sun and the moon gaze upon each other from opposite edges of the horizon, the moon for one moment shyly lifting her pale face, tinted with a maiden's blush, at the presence of the sun, in his radiant garb of crimson and gold. He, for that instant, flashing all his glories forth in homage to the eastern queen, bends low beneath the western hills, leaving the heavens shawled in purple and crimson. Orange and scarlet form a loom, the softer, richer hues of which shame those of famed Cashmere.

The encampment consisted of more than a hundred mia-mia, neatly constructed of bark and waterproof, with thatched, dome-like roofs. Long spears stood in the ground at the entrance to each dwelling. The light dart, feathered with grass tree, which is hurled afar, urged by the ingenious womrah (a throwing stick), the heavier javelin, barbed with the teeth of the kangaroo, and longer than its swift glancing brethren.

As the moments passed dark forms glided from the forest successively into the circle of the fire-light, dropping from hand or shoulder the spoils of the chase into a common heap. The pile of game grew larger, higher still, showing from what a noble hunting-ground the Epoi took their prey. Mingled indiscriminately were the greater and the lesser kangaroo, the shy, dark wild duck of the upland creeks, the stately, gliding swan of the broad, reed-fringed lakes. The great wingless bird which rivals the ostrich of the desert was there; the lesser rodents and marsupials; while to crown the abundant feast some of the dark lithe lads and more aged men brought in coolamuns brimming over with the luscious honeycomb. All, save these last, were cast carelessly upon the heap, to be divided by the elders of the tribe when the last hunter returned.

The women, old and young, kept the fires glowing and the oven-stones red hot in expectation of the approaching feast. Naked, dusky children, with dark-gleaming eager eyes, gathered around the savory pyramid. The latest lingering sky-tint from the hidden sun passed from view. There was one, but one, hunter missing. It was Windaru—the most fearless, the most skilful of them all. He it was who brought the richest honey, the longest, strongest strings of wood duck, the fattest emu. Suddenly a sound of fast-flying footsteps was heard, and Windaru bounded into the camp. Instead of, as was his custom, proudly throwing from his shoulders his hunter-spoils, he came empty-handed. Driving his spears fiercely into the earth, he stood panting before them. His arched chest rose and fell with the mechanical sob which indicates the distress produced by long-sustained speed. The muscles clasp his supple form quivered and strained as if striving to bear him onward in his mad career. His eyes seemed gazing far away, fastened to the terror they had left behind. As he stood beside his tall spears, horror appeared to radiate from him. The men of the tribe drew silently around, awaiting the commencement of his speech. A young girl, tall and lithe, with startled eyes, glided to him and seated herself at his feet. Gradually the heaving breast, the quivering muscles grew calm. His eyes rested sadly on his people, as he thus spoke:

"My brothers! let us sharpen our war spears and count our fighting men. We have to fight against an enemy such as the oldest warrior of our tribe never gazed upon. I wandered far to-day. As I hunted the lagoons where the ocean drinks of the waters of the Yarra Yarra, I heard a sound come out of a black cloud which rested on the salt water. The cloud hovered over a floating island which had wings like the flying fox. I hid myself. I watched the island float quickly over the water. Within a spear's flight of the shore it grew still. Its wings were folded,

it sat on the water with three leafless pines growing upward. Then I saw two canoes paddle out toward the land where I lay hid. In these canoes were men; when they landed my head was filled with a great terror. My brothers! the men were white! They were tall and strong, they carried strange weapons in their hands. The sea birds flew screaming round the heads of these strange being. They pointed their weapons at the birds, fire came forth out of the ends with a mighty noise. The birds fell dead. Men of Epoi! these strange warriors have come to take our land. They will point their weapons at us, we shall be devoured by fire as were the sea birds. When I saw the birds fall dead, far beyond the reach of our lightest spear, terror seized me and I fled. Let the ancients of the tribe now say how we shall meet this terrible foe. The tale of Windaru is done."

The men of the tribe, old and young, listened with wonder and fear to these awe-striking tidings. In their faces was visible the hopeless, withered look common to men about to engage overwhelming odds. Windaru pulled up his spears, spoke a few words in a low tone to the girl coiled at his feet, then walked slowly towards his mia-mia. When there, he placed the spears erect at the entrance and sat moodily before the fire.

The girl followed him. Perceiving that he did not attempt to address her, she spoke in the soft, low gutturals of the Epoi tongue: "Shall Oondilla bring Windaru the bright honey or the young of the wood duck? The stones of the oven are hot. He has travelled far and fast; he must be weary. If these strange, white beings are strong, the bravest warrior of the Epoi should eat and be strong to fight with them."

The pleading tones and low, soft voice had their effect. Windaru was at the next moon to take Oondilla to his mia-mia. He answered wearily: "If Oondilla will bring the honey and the duck, Windaru will eat and be strong." When Oondilla went for her share the old men were dividing the spoils. The women were permitted to eat of certain portions of the kangaroo, young wood duck, bandicoots, opossum and honey; the elders and hunters reserving to themselves the haunch of the kangaroo, the emu, the black duck and iguanas. Oondilla returned to Windaru laden with honeycomb, a plump young wood duck and pieces cut from the fattest emu. These latter she placed in the oven, covered with aromatic gum leaves, heaped over with earth to retain the heat. Windaru gazed on her sadly. From time immemorial his primeval people, when conquered, had forfeited the flower of their womankind to the conquerors—and he loved Oondilla as few of his race had ever loved.

Sadness brooded in the air above the camp. Instead of the gay, incessant chatter of the women and children, mingling with the deeper tones of the men, there was a mournful hum as of a disturbed hive of bees. The old women kept up a wailing corroboree chant, beating with feeble hands the rolled opossum rugs between their knees. The old men sat in council—the younger men taking no part in the debate, but passing to and fro between their own fires and where the grey-beards sat. Some, in an irresolute manner, finished half-made weapons or sharpened blunted spears, hardening their points in the fire. As the night wore on the encampment became silent. The fires grew dim. But the grey hunters and warriors talked on.

On the morning following the evil tidings of Windaru, the camp of the Epoi was early astir. A silent meal was made from the fragments of the evening feast. As the sun appeared in the east twelve greybeards of the tribe, headed by Worangou, chief of the Epoi and father of Windaru, stalked into the open space reserved in the centre of the camp. Worangou planted his weapon in the ground, and stood beside it. Then each of the eleven thrust his spear into the earth, forming a circle round their chief, every man standing beside his weapon in the inside of the ring.

At a signal from Worangou, the men of the tribe drew near to hear the decision of the wise men in this novel danger. When all were present the chief spoke:

"My children," he said, "you have all heard the tale of sorrow told by Windaru. A floating island has approached our shores, from which have landed men of a different colour, covered with skins of animals unknown to us, and bearing in their hands weapons which destroy with fire. How shall our spears successfully contend against warriors who have but to hold forth an arm to destroy their foes? Legends have reached the wise men of the Epoi from tribes on the northern shores of the great water. These legends tell that floating islands appeared many years ago to them. Men, white in colour, and armed with the same strange weapons, landed and made an encampment upon their hunting-grounds."

"What happened, O! warriors of the Epoi? The tribes of the northern shore fell before the white men as leaves before the great dust storm. They opposed them in vain. We, if we oppose them, shall also be destroyed and our women made a prey. I and my old men have, through the long watches of the night, taken counsel as to how we may save the hunting-grounds of the Epoi. Let us meet the strange people with boughs of peace in our hands. Should they become our friends it will be well. If our enemies, an Epoi can die. I, with my old men and twelve young men, will go forth to-day. We will offer peace to the stranger."

Worangou, having finished speaking, selected, amid profound silence, twelve hunters from the

tribe to accompany him. Among them strode Windaru. At a sign from their chief the hunters sprang like squirrels into the branches of the huge trees surrounding the camp, and with their stone axes cut from them large boughs.

Armed only with these weapons of peace, the company of heralds set forth to proffer vassalage to the white man. On arriving within view of the sea, the truth of the tale told by Windaru was apparent. The floating island rested quietly on the water, with the three leafless pines up-reared towards heaven. Many tents were already pitched on the shore, while pale, full-bearded, strong men were gathering firewood and cooking food. Canoes of large size went back and forward between the shore and the dreaded island. Worangou placed himself at the head of his little band, and all danced towards the white men, waving their boughs high over their heads, and chanting the song of peace.

The strangers came forth to meet them; and perceiving that the dark sons of the soil were unarmed, laid down their weapons. Then for the first time, on the southern shores of the great ocean, the black man and the white man gazed at each other's eyes. With kindly signs the white men invited Worangou and his followers to their camp. Food was offered to them. They were presented with iron axes, with mirrors, beads, and gay-coloured handkerchiefs. The younger men, all save Windaru, quickly lost fear of the dreaded strangers. It was long before they tired of encircling their heads with the gaudy cloth and viewing their swart countenances for the first time in mirrors.

Windaru and Worangou talked apart. The future destiny of their hitherto free and beautiful country was apparently revealed but to these two.

As the father and son talked, youth and age seemed wondrously alike. Their souls appeared to have penetrated their bodies. These souls were fate-laden. Who shall decide which bore the keenest agony? Youth with a withered Future—age with its Past erased?

No longer would Worangou sing to himself the war-song of the Epoi, telling of by-gone glory, the wisdom of its old men, the strength of its youth. The white Destroyer had come. The Past and the Future of the black men died on the same day.

Peace was established with the strangers. The Epoi encampment was changed to a spot within a short distance of the tents. Generous of gifts were the foreigners, for they needed guides to point out the fertile plains—to lead them to the broad inland lakes.

Weeks passed away. The Epoi still lingered by the tents of the strangers. Other floating islands arrived. From these came forth animals as strange to the inhabitants of the land as were the white men themselves. Sheep with woolly skins. Cattle whose horns resemble boomerangs. Dogs, swifter and more fierce than any they had seen. Birds which had wings but did not fly.

Willingly did the Epoi toil for their new found friends. The sheep and cattle were guided to the haunts of the kangaroo and wallaby, where the longest and sweetest grasses grew. The game fled scared back to the hills. Hunting seemed forgotten by the tribe. They fed on the offal of the slaughtered beasts. The fierce dogs of the stranger pulled down for them the kangaroo and the emu. They smoked the rest-wood of the white man. They drank his fire-water, and danced and shouted among themselves. In these days Worangou, with Windaru and Oondilla, dwelt apart. They looked on with stricken hearts at the decadence of their people.

For Worangou, his authority was gone. The demon of the white man's fire-water had fastened on a prey hitherto beyond reach. He clasped his willing victims with the tenacity of the Poult. Windaru had supplied his mia-mia with game from the forest. It was daily more difficult to obtain. He refused to guide his enemies to the grassy dells among the hills, or to discover the secrets of his hunting-grounds. He accepted no presents, and Oondilla was the only woman of the tribe undecked in the cheap finery freely bestowed upon the others.

It was many months since the floating island had first appeared near the silent strand of the Epoi. Windaru strode into the camp long after the moon had risen. He threw from his weary shoulders his day's spoil. Far and fast he had toiled for it, and his soul was troubled to find the game retreating still farther inland day by day.

He passed on to the mia-mia of Worangou. The old warrior lay on his back, with face up-turned to the sky. The opossum rug was cast from his brawny chest. His flowing silver beard shone in the moonlight. His lips moved; his heaving breast showed that his sleep was troubled.

Oondilla, ever watchful, with well-heated oven-stones, prepared the evening meal. Together they partook of it. Then they sat silently watching the sleep of their father—of the father of Epoi. As the moon hovered over the centre of the earth Worangou awoke and sang loud and long the death-song of an Epoi.

Mournfully rose and fell the monotonous cadence of Fate fulfilled. An avalanche of woe seemed to pour from the heart of a lost race. In that death-song the blood of the black man's future was offered up as a holocaust for the mighty requirements of the white man's rule. The last tones of the song sunk lower and lower, till borne away by the wind as it sighed through the swaying forest trees.

The eyes of the old chief fell on the listening

countenances and intent forms of his son and daughter. He beckoned to them. They approached and sat at his feet. Windaru knew well that he was about to listen to the last words of his chief and father. Patient and dumb as a young Indian warrior he made a gesture of attention.

"Windaru, O my son, and Oondilla, my daughter!" said the great chieftain solemnly, "the only ones, of so many, who have not cast the traditions of the Epoi behind you, listen: My soul will linger but a little while in the land of my love and of my birth. Last night my soul was in spirit land. I have looked upon the future of our race."

"I saw the tribe of Epoi, with its mia-mias scattered over many hills. The hunters spread over the plains and thread the forest. Kangaroo and emu fell before the swift-flying spear. The bees rendered up their treasure of yellow honey. The rivers and lakes offered their fish, the earth its roots and herbs. The women of the tribe were busy all through the long days trimming and softening the skins of the animals slain by the hunters, fashioning them into warm rugs for the cold of winter. The children were many and rolled with the dogs on the grassy slopes, or played with the 'witchie-witchie' among the mia-mias. The ovens were gaping with fiery teeth of red-hot glowing stones for the ever-ready feast. Peace and plenty filled the land. The Epoi were free and happy."

"Suddenly from the East arose a cloud on the sea, with three leafless pine trees upreared to heaven. Swiftly the cloud travelled till it rested in the air over the hunting-ground of the Epoi. In the centre of the cloud stood a form white as the down of the black swan, but with a cold and cruel countenance."

"He looked on the lands of the Epoi. He saw that they were good. He stretched forth his hands over the hills and valleys and there flew from him two white owls. These darted into the plains and multiplied into myriads. The air was full of them. They killed and devoured all the ground game—bandicoots and water rats, iguanas, field mice, and opossums—they left not one alive. When there were no more, the owls disappeared, save two, which returned to the Cloud."

"The Cloud Form again raised his hand. Fishing nets descended and raked the fish from every river and lake, leaving them to rot in the sun. The nets were again drawn back to the Cloud."

"The hand was again uplifted. The kangaroo and emu were seized with a pestilence. They went blind—they killed themselves against trees and were drowned in the rivers and lakes, until none were left."

"Then the hand of the Cloud Form was again stretched forth to sprinkle the wide land with liquid fire. The blackmen, as it touched them, went mad. They fought—they slew one another. There were no animals for food—no fish—no skins to make coverings from the cold. The women bore no children, while those not slain by their brethren died of cold and madness."

"My soul gazed far and near over the beautiful land of Epoi. There was nothing living to be seen, such as I have seen in my youth, my manhood, my old age."

"Again the Form spread his hands forth above the land. It became covered with sheep in countless numbers. Doves of cattle and horses fed on the plains. White men built great camps on the hills and in the valleys. Everywhere there was life; but everywhere that life was white. Then a voice said unto my soul, 'Worangou! return unto the earth and sing the last song of thy race—a race without a future, without a history.' This, my children, is the vision which my soul saw in the Spirit Land."

When the sun rose the mia-mias of Worangou and Windaru were empty. The tribe of Epoi never more set eyes upon their chief or upon his son and his son's wife.

BRELOQUES POUR DAMES.

"LET me see your paper a moment, dear." Husband: "Yes, as soon as we get to the tunnel."

A man who had filed a petition for a divorce was informed by his counsel that his wife had filed a "cross petition," as lawyers call it. "A cross petition!" exclaimed the husband; "it is just like her. She never did a good-natured thing in her life."

CALINO has the misfortune to lose his wife. He ordered to be engraved upon her tombstone the single word "Regrets." "Why," said the stone-cutter to him, "do you not say eternal regrets?" "Can't do it," said Calino; "I only rent the lot in the graveyard for five years."

A JERSEY widower, who had taken another partner, was serenaded on his wedding night. The parties brought a phonograph, in which was preserved some of the obnoxious of his first wife, and when they set it going under his window, the happy bridegroom broke out into a cold sweat, and crawled up the chimney on a bridal tour.

"Is it becoming to me?" she asked, as she paraded in the costume of one hundred years ago, before the man who is not her lord and master, but is her husband. "Yes, my dear," said he, meekly. "Don't you wish I could dress this way all the time?" she asked. "No, my dear," he replied; "but I wish you had lived when that was the style."

A PHILADELPHIA friend, who rejoiced in the name of comfort, paid his debts to a young and attractive widow, named Rachel H—, residing on Long Island. Either her griefs were too new or her lover too old, or from some other cause, the offer was declined. Whereupon a Quaker friend remarked that it was the first modern instance he had known where Rachel refused to be comforted.

It is said that Dan Thompson's father is the copy from which the actor takes his Yankee character, if that is so Dan plays the old man for all he is worth.