

WIAHAWTHA.

PRELUDE:

SHOULD you ask me whence this story,
 Story of the House of Learning,
 Where the children of the village,
 Of the "Village of the Forest",
 Get their knowledge and their wisdom;
 For there are taught the classic tales,
 Taught the cubic and the square root,
 And equations, simultaneous,
 And their heads are full to bursting,
 Full of lore and full of wisdom.
 Then I should answer you straightway,
 These be tales that to me were sung
 By the whispering breeze that strayed
 Through the still forms and silent halls,
 Like departed spirits haunting
 The scenes of early strife and toil;
 Sung to me in voice pathetic,
 By the spider on the ceiling;
 Often chanted is the story,
 But by men, uncomprehended.

I.

In the centre of the village,
 Neither eastward nor to westward,
 Stands, in grim and awful silence,
 Stands the school by men erected;
 Built by the Chiefs of our great tribe,
 Built by white bricks, made of the clay,
 And built on rocks that grew together
 By the magic of the mason;
 And slatestones had it for its roof,
 Stones of red, mixed with stones of brown;
 Green meadows round the school were spread.
 Meadows fringed by trees of maple,
 Standing in the midst of meadows,
 In haughty height and slender grace,
 Stood the magic "staff," reaching unto
 Heaven, in which it disappeared.
 Erected by the royal command,
 And mandate of the Council Great,
 Who doubting access otherwise,
 Erected this means whereby they
 May ascend as old Elijah.

II.

And the Council sendeth forth word,
 Sendeth forth word to let men know,
 That they must one and all attend
 The planting of the Council's pole.
 Now, in his lodge, stayed one big Chief,
 Chief of Learning and of lore,
 Heedless of the Council's mandate,
 And stayed he in his lodge and smoked.

This was the chief who beareth name,
 Beareth the name of the "Forests."
 This Chief came not to the meeting,
 And his voice was not heard thereat.
 A messenger came from the Chief,
 Came from the big Chief in his lodge;
 And the messenger said to them:
 "Sick is the great chief in his lodge;
 He cannot be with you to-day,
 For sick is he, yes, unto death,
 As the medicine man can tell.
 Yes, of the great medicine man,
 This is the message he giveth:
 "If our great Chief goes out to-day,
 His lamp of life likewise will do,
 His spirit wings will take and fly."

III.

The anger of the other chiefs,
 Was as iron heated in the fire,
 Like iron heated, heated white;
 This tale of woe touched not their heart.
 Straightway the chiefs together came,
 Came together in the Council tent,
 And they charged this Chief of Learning,
 Straightway charged him with treachery;
 And they hunted out his crimes,
 All the crimes he had committed.
 They hunted, as the squirrel hunts
 In the forest for the acorns.
 And they gathered these together,
 And not one they left behind them.
 Now the Chief of Learning angered,
 Angered much at his accusers;
 Said they were a lot of women,
 And were unjust to accuse him.
 But his anger vanished quickly,
 Vanished as a storm in summer,
 When he saw that they meant business.
 And he struggled hard against them,
 But it was landslides opposing.

IV.

So this mighty Chief of Learning,
 Rich in all the store of knowledge,
 Learned in all the lore of old men,
 By the Council was out cast,
 Ejected from the House of Lore.
 And broken was the great Chief's heart,
 And burned his soul with agony,
 And this he told unto his friends;
 "This cursed village shall I leave,
 I shall leave this Forest City,
 And to another land I'll wander,
 Where I can read my title clear."
 So he journeyed westward, westward,
 Towards the land of golden sunsets,