

Whatever of thought, of feeling or belief the author has embodied in the League of the Iroquois, he holds to be but the legitimate interpretation of the customs and legends in which he finds alike the subject for his pen and the inspiration of his Muse. If he has softened and modified their forms as they existed in a rude barbarous age, it is but in keeping with a well recognized license, without which any original, poetic treatment of his subject would be impossible.

Instead of following to the letter any one form of the story, he has chosen rather to take from several their poetic features; or, when departing from them all, he has still endeavored to keep true to their spirit,—to the highest conceptions of the Indian mind. And that he might write a poem that should be recognized as true to nature, not alone as the White Man understands nature, he has sought to invoke a Muse that could see as the Red Man saw, could feel as he felt; and that could—so far as the impediments of language will permit—interpret to us the facts and experiences of the marvellous world in which the Indian dwells,—one that will be found to be, nevertheless, a very human world.