

greatly have preferred to hear his rude hosts chanting the psalms of the Church, had to listen to an endless repetition of strange cries which neither he nor they understood.¹

Nevertheless, it was among the Eastern Algonquin tribes that patient research was ultimately to discover the richest treasure of song and legend, and tradition which the North American Indian has as yet given to the world. It was among the Passamaquoddies and Penobscots of Maine, and the Micmacs of New Brunswick, that Mr. Charles G. Leland, with the willing and fruitful help of Mrs. Wallace Brown, of the Rev. Silas Rand and Mr. E. Jack, was able to work the rich mine of myths and tales—all originally in poetic form—which he has given us in his "Algonquin Legends."

Mr. Leland maintains that "in the red Indian mythology of New England, and of Canada and New Brunswick, we have a collection of vigorous, icy, powerful legends, like those of a strong northern race, while those of the middle continent, or Chippewa, are far feebler and gentler. Hiawatha-Manobozho is to Glooskap as a flute to a war trumpet."² The mythopœic faculty of the Eastern Algonquins is marked by a strong faith in magic. The greatest cause of this, Mr. Leland says, "is one which the white man talks about without feeling, and which the Indian feels without talking about it. I mean the poetry of nature, with all its quaint and beautiful superstitions. To every Algonquin a rotten log by the road, covered with moss, suggests the wild legend of the log-demon; the Indian corn and sweet flag in the swamp are the descendants of beautiful spirits who still live in them; Meeko, the squirrel, has the power of becoming a giant monster; flowers, beasts, trees, have all loved and talked and sung, and can even now do so, should the magician only come to speak the spell."³ Among the offspring of the aboriginal muse, most worthy to be classed with the higher flights of European song, may be included "The Song of the Stars," appended to the "Algonquin Legends"—

" We are the stars which sing,
We sing with our light;
We are the birds of fire,
We fly over the sky.
Our light is a voice;
We make a road for spirits,
For the spirits to pass over.
Among us are three hunters
Who chase a bear;
There never was a time
When they were not hunting.
We look down on the mountains.
This is the Song of the Stars."

Writing of that early and grand mythology of the aborigines, the existence of which is occasionally revealed by transmuted shreds and patches, Mr. Leland says: "By great exertions we might recover it, but the old Indians who retain its fragments are passing away rapidly, and no subject attracts so little interest among our *literati*. A few hundred dollars, expended annually in each State, would result in the collection of all that is extant

¹ Rel. des Jésuites, 1634, p. 18.

² Algonquin Legends, p. 338.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 338, 339.