

A LEGEND OF HOCHELAGA.

Near "Ladawanna" the Great River,
Lived an Indian maiden fair,
Her bright eyes were Cupid's quiver,
Raven black, her braided hair.
In the "lodge," or gently moving
Through the village, she was seen
Ever smiling, ever loving;
Or at evening on the green,
Seated by her aged mother,
Watched the youths, who "neath her eye,
Wrestled fiercely with each other,
Striving for the mastery.
Two, there were who vowed to win her,
For they trod their first "war-path,"
And each on each they looked intently,
Like the storm-cloud gathering wrath.
And each day they brought into her
Spoils of chase, or presents rare,—
Singing-birds, or lovely feathers,
Flowers bright to deck her hair.
Then, each tried in wildest tempest,
Who the "Rapids" best might "shoot,"
Or, which thread the densest forest
Where is heard the "owl's" "hoot."
And the "Spirit of the Mountain"
Would mislead the intruding foot!
Thus they wooed the lovely maiden,
Tried by every art to gain
Even a glance with favour laden,
Yet each youth still tried in vain.

Passed is the summer bright, and now,
Autumn has tugged the mountain brow,
While the "Tribe" rests in peace serene,
And plenty all around is seen.
But soon the thoughts of peace and rest
Are scattered from each throbbing breast,
As a wild "scout" comes bounding in,
With nostril wide, and panting breath,
Like a swift messenger of death,
And tells of a fierce hostile band.
Of "warriors" on the "war-path" seen
Approaching fast this quiet land.
How changed the scene!—for quick as thought,
A "Council," with all wisdom fraught,
Of aged "Chiefs" and hardy "Braves"—
Is called, and soon in silence grave
They sit around the "Council-fire"
And sternly meditate on war.
Then rose the old and wise "Sagoy"
And, stretching forth his withered hand,
Thus spoke aloud in accents grand,
"Hear! all ye Chiefs, my words this day,
And listen, all ye faithful band,
Wait not, until like panther-sly,
These serpents creep into the camp,
And to surround, and trap us try
Then, laden with our wealth decamp,
Rejoicing in their victory!—
No!—rise to aid your pride of birth,
And sweep such miscreants from the earth!
What are these dogs, that they should try
A tribe like ours, thus to destroy?
They know full well, that in fair fight,
They would be quickly put to flight.
Not could they stand for one short hour
Against our host's fierce helping power!"
The "tribe" approve his counsel wise,
And straight to arm, they all arise.
The "warriors" in their "war-paint" grim,
And bristling crests, pass out and in
Giving command the "camp" to guard,
Or ordering "scouts," with visage hard,
To range around, and keep strict watch
And lurking foe to prompt dispatch.
Thus, setting not the invaders know
That they were bound to meet the "foe."

While thus her "tribe" prepare for war,
The fate Wabiscan wept—
"Ah! better had it been by far
That I had owned my love for thee,
And not cold silence kept.
As thus she mourned with head bowed low,
Like drooping lily cup,
A gentle touch—quick she looked up!
And close beside her gazing down
Her loved Wistononau stands.
"Oh, fair Wabiscan!—if for me
These gentle tears do flow,
Then meet me on the mountain brow,
When west the sun lies low.
He said, and quickly disappeared
Among the crowd of "Braves."
As when a stately sea-bird dives
And round him close the waves,
Up, rising in her glad surprise,
Wabiscan proudly stood
A moment, like a statue fair,
Then fled into the wood
To wander far from prying eyes,
And gain her wonted mood.
Close by a crystal streamlet, where
She stooped to taste the wave,
She saw in lovely clusters there
The sweetest flowers love ever gave.
By true love named "Forget-me-not,"
All eagerly she gathered them
In her soft gentle hands,
Then some she twined in her rich braids
And some she wove in bands.
Her eyes all radiant with love's smile,
While thus she softly sang the while,
In tones would melt the hardest heart,—
"Oh! sweet it is to meet my love,
But sad 'twill be to part."
Thus passed the time till slanting low
The sunbeams gild the corn,
And all the streams in sunset glow,
Looked ruddy, as at morn.
Like "Flora," decked, tripped now the maid
To meet her lover true.
Round neck and arm, in silken braid,
"Forget-me-not" so blue,
Now all rejoicing—now afraid,
She fast and faster flew!
By the high fields of tasseled corn
Beside the rushing stream,
Still—still, as in a pleasing dream,
She near the "mountain" drew.
High on the cliff a form she sees,
And, hidden half among the trees,
She deems it him she loves:
So, up the mountain path she moves
With heart and footstep light,
But when at last the top is gained
She stands aghast afright—
Not Wistononau before her stands,
But fierce Micoonau—grasps her hands,
He glared upon her lovely form,
And, heeding not her wild alarm,
"Say, Wabiscan," he muttered deep—
"Say,—what dost thou up here?"
I heard what that "dog" Wistononau
To thee this morning said,
And, were he here, this sneaky arm
Would lay him with the dead.
Long have I wooed thee, and I vow
That not with him shalt thou wed now!
Either to me thy troth be given
Or sooner shall this cliff be riven,
Than thou shouldst be his bride.
Wilt thou be mine?"
I ask thee not with fancy free
A willing heart to give,
Say but thou wilt,—and it may be,
That thou hast long to live;
Give but one frown.

And from this height
I hurl thee instant down!"
"To give thee an unwilling heart,
Proud Wabiscan would scorn,
And better far from life to part
Than leave my love forlorn."
Scarcely had these words her pale lips passed
When her light form in both hands grasped,
He raised her in the air!—
"Now, wilt thou still invite thy fate?
Or wilt thou yield 'er yet too late."
The only answer that she knew
Was one wild cry, "Oh! Wistononau!"
Then like a tiger glared his eyes,
And on he strode with fendish yell.
But, swift as the blue lightning flies,
An arrow pierced him,—down he fell
Prone to the earth,—no more to rise;
Then, quick as he fell, stood Wistononau,
All panting, at his side,
And from his rigid grasp soon drew
His darling, rescued bride.

Montreal.

E. L. M.

A GREAT MISTAKE.

Mrs. Dameril had come in late from her afternoon drive, and the Blackliffe drawing-room looked especially comfortable after the chill fog outside. So, instead of going upstairs, she laid aside her hat, and sat sipping her tea. She was not left long alone. Voices were heard—a childish treble and a deep bass—and presently there appeared in the doorway a rosy little damsel of three years, riding on the shoulders of a dark-bearded man.

"Ah, Louise! I thought that I heard the carriage."

"Yes, I've just come in. It was horribly cold, and I wanted some tea to revive me. Well, Millie, what mischief have you been about?"

"There, Millie, go and confess," said the father, setting her down. "Let me see: Dolly's nose is melted. I think that is the worst enormity to-day."

"Mrs. Dameril's beautiful face had lacked something till eyes and lips smiled a welcome to the child climbing her knee."

"And how did you fare?" her husband asked as he threw himself into a chair opposite to her.

"Oh, pretty well. Some of the people were out, but I caught those I most wanted."

"Mrs. Vivian, to wit?"

"No; I had a note from her before I started. Here it is. She promises us her boy protégé, you see."

"That's good. I hear he sings like a seraph. 'Her Viking.' Who on earth does she mean by her Viking?"

"Captain Lester. She expects him soon, I believe."

Allan Dameril looked up. "Do you mean Harold Lester?"

"Yes; he got his promotion the other day."

"I thought he was in the Pacific."

"So he was till lately. Now, I believe, he's appointed to a ship on the American station. Of course I shall tell Mrs. Vivian to bring him."

"Of course," but the assent was absently spoken.

"Come, Millie," said the mother, rising, "are you going up stairs with me? I've something to show you."

As the two went out hand-in-hand, Allan Dameril's gaze followed them. He could hardly look at them without pride, and yet was there pride in his dark eyes just then? When the door had closed behind them he started up, and walking to the fire, leant his arms upon the mantelpiece, and bowed his head upon them. His thoughts were busy, but not with wife or child.

"Oh, Grace! if you were here," he muttered, "you would help me. And yet I made you miserable enough. I won't wish you back again. I made my own bed, and I must lie on it."

His ride next day took him across the hills to Hadleigh. He had promised his wife to carry some messages to old Mrs. Vivian, and he had besides his own reasons for going to the Manor. When he had done his errand he turned up on to the wild lonely moorland. He had often come up there for a gallop, but now he let his mare wander on at her own will. That keen bronzed face of his, generally so animated, was now almost despairing in its anxiety. He was thinking of a work that he had set himself to do, and which was not done—of a peril that was coming fast upon him, and which he could not escape. And yet he was not a man to let his heart sink or his hands hang down.

That evening he said to his wife, "Louise, what do you say to a run over to Paris when this musical affair of ours is over?"

She looked up at him, surprised. "To Paris? Why should we go there?"

"Oh, I don't know. It would be a change after vegetating here so long. Shouldn't you like it?"

"No, I don't think I should. I'm getting too lazy to care about crossing the channel in mid-winter. Still that is no reason why you should not go if you fancy it."

"I've no fancy for going alone," he said quietly, and took up his newspaper again.

Mrs. Dameril's conscience smote her. He was always so ready to humor her slightest whim that it seemed hard that he should be disappointed. Presently she did what she was very seldom moved to do—she rose, and kneeling down beside him, said lightly:

"Allan, I was surly just now, I'll go to Paris if you really wish it."

He looked up at her. He had not been angry—he never was angry with her; but the sudden clearing of his face showed that he had been disappointed.

"Will you? That's good of you, Louise."

Perhaps she had not quite expected to be taken at her word, but she answered pleasantly: "Yes, I will. When shall we start?"

"We might be off directly after the concert. I must be home in February, you know, to meet Philip."

So it was settled. But three days later Mrs. Dameril came down to breakfast with a grave face. Tilly was terribly hoarse, and the doctor must be fetched. He came and pronounced the child in for an attack of bronchitis. It had been taken in time, but there was no more thought of Paris in her mother's mind.

"Even if she were pretty well again I should be afraid to leave her," Mrs. Dameril explained to her husband. "She is so willful with nurse, and any chill might be dangerous. But you had better find another companion, Allan."

He shook his head. "I shall get along here very well," he said. "He was dearly fond of his little girl, but at that moment he was almost angry with her for falling ill."

The evening of the concert came, and Millie, swathed in an elder-down wrapper, watched from her nursery-window the carriage-lamps flashing out and in between the great oaks in the park. Down stairs all was light and warmth. Mrs. Dameril in her black velvet and white lace, stood greeting her in-coming guests; and her husband stood near, talking to one and another, but glancing ever and anon at the pale, clear-cut profile of his beautiful wife.

"She looks even better than usual, I think, to-night," said Mrs. Vivian, confidently, following the direction of his eyes as he stood beside her. "I must ask Harry whether he doesn't think her improved. It must be four years at least since he saw her. Isn't it shabby of him only to give me a week after all the care I took of him when he was a sickly little Indian?"

"Yes, very," Allan Dameril responded, mechanically; and just then Captain Lester came up to them.

"Ah, Harry," said his aunt, "I was abusing you."

"That's too bad, when I only came to you twenty-four hours ago."

"No, that's the very ground of my abuse. But tell me—never mind Mr. Dameril—don't you think Mrs. Dameril is handsomer than Mrs. Sidney ever was?"

The color rose into the sailor's comely face.

"I decline to be catechized," he said, smiling. "Mr. Dameril told me once that I was an impudent little beggar. He might tell me so again. I could not expect, you see, to hold my own against him. He is a county magnate, I well, I am only a beggarly sailor."

The two men's eyes met for a moment, then Dameril said abruptly:

"There's an old admiral yonder thirsting to hear your Polynesian experiences. I relied on your good nature, and promised him a treat. Will you come?"

"To be sure," said Lester, carelessly, and they went off together.

"How tired you look," said Mrs. Dameril to her husband, as the last rattle of wheels died away.

"I might return the compliment," he answered, handing her the candle he had just lighted.

"Yes, I have worked hard, between solos, trios, and small talk. Now you, whenever I looked at you, were prowling about alone."

"Oh, I made a few remarks. But, after all, a host's duty is to see that every one else is amused."

"Well, I think every one was amused. I think it has been a success," said Mrs. Dameril, as she went wearily up stairs. But she certainly was tired, and her rest that night was broken by disturbing dreams. When she awoke the sun was shining into her room, and her husband had vanished.

He had gone out at daybreak, so she was told—and she came in as he was, unlocking the post-bag.

"See, Allan, this is from granny," she said. "It is marked 'immediate.' I hope there is nothing wrong."

He broke the seal and glanced at the contents. Soothing in his face made his wife exclaim:

"What is it? Tell me!"

"Nothing—at least nothing to frighten you. Philip is to be at Southampton to-day."

"To-day! A fortnight before they expected him. Can you get there in time?"

"I—I don't know. I hardly think so."

"Let me see the note," and he gave it to her.

"Oh, yes you can. See, she says to-night or to-morrow. The midday train will get you in by five o'clock. I'll have your things put up at once."

She was moving to the bell, when he called her back.

"Louise, do you think it worth while? It would be a rush, and some one is sure to look after him."

She stared at him in astonishment.

"Why, Allan, you know how ill he is. You can't leave him to shift for himself. Granny relies on you, and of course you must go. It's only to order the dog-cart and send word to Vincent. Now come to breakfast."

He lingered a moment at the bay-window, looking out at the cold, gray sky, and his look was as hopeless as it had been on the moor, a fortnight before.

"I thought I was safe," he was saying inwardly, "but I believe there is a curse upon me."

"And you'll be back to-morrow?" asked his wife, when he bade her farewell an hour later.

"Yes, to-morrow—without fail. Dearest—" he paused a moment, with his hands on her shoulders, as if about to ask her something; but if so, he changed his mind, and only said, earnestly, "Take care of yourself and the child. I shall be home to-morrow."

"It's not a very long parting," she said, brightly, but his yearning gaze seemed to reproach her.

"No, it is not a long parting—at least I hope not. Good-bye, my wife, good-bye."

II.

"Dear Mrs. Dameril, may I come in?" It was getting dusk. Louise had been playing hide-and-seek with Millie till both were tired out, and now she was resting.

"Of course you may. But, Constance, who would have thought of seeing you at this hour?"

"Ah, but I want something," explained the rector's daughter, coming forward. "I know Mr. Dameril is away; papa told me so just now, and I want you to come and help us with our Christmas-tree. Please do."

Mrs. Dameril hesitated, but she had a long, lonely evening before her, and she liked that rectory full of girls and boys. So in a few minutes she and Constance were driving down to the village.

"Ah, Miss Constance, you've done well," said the rector, as he greeted his sister's wife, "and I've something to show for my time, too. I've laid violent hands on Captain Lester."

Mrs. Dameril did not seem overpleased to see him.

"I did not expect to meet you here," she said, as they shook hands. "I thought it was to be only a village gathering, and you are all together an outsider."

"I know that," he returned. "I was not overbold. I was only venturing through the village when Mrs. Beaumont captured me. But little man's tail was a butt, and I've a weakness for small fry."

"Then you ought to appreciate my friend George here," said Mrs. Dameril, stepping to put the round check of a sturdy boy of two. "Come George, won't you take me to see that great black perry-cat of yours?" and she led away her small cavalier.

The presents had been distributed, the pink tapers had been turned out, and the children were at supper. Mrs. Dameril, released from magic nets, was talking to the doctor's wife; and Captain Lester, sitting next her, was turning over a photograph-book.

"Ah!" he said abruptly, "surely that must be meant for Grace Dameril."

He spoke to Mrs. Dameril, and she, turning round, glanced at the open book.

"Yes," she said, "it is; it was taken a few months before she died."

He looked at it more closely. "It looks her too. How long is it since she died?"

"Nearly four years."

"Poor girl! you and she were great friends?"

"Yes, we were."

"And yet I could never quite make out why. Somehow, I never thought her interesting. Perhaps I did not know her well enough."

Louise made no answer, and he looked up at her.

"You are thinking that I ought not to discuss your friend. I beg your pardon."

"No," she said, in a low voice. "Shall I tell you what I was thinking?"

"If you please."

"That it is a pity people should take so much useless trouble to die."

Her own words started her. They seemed to have rushed forth against her will. They startled him, too.

"What do you mean? You speak enigmas," he answered, slowly.

She must tell him now—she had gone too far to stop, and there was a certain relief to her in saying what she was going to say.

"Do I?" and her bright eyes looked straight into his. "I shall I make my meaning clearer if I say that I once saw a note of yours to Grace Dameril."

"A note of mine? I never wrote a line to her in my life. Why on earth should I?"

In Mrs. Dameril's answering smile there was a touch of scorn.

"Why? Your memory is bad, but I'll refresh it. Have you quite forgotten that you once asked Grace Dameril to be your wife? Your letter was short, but it was sufficiently urgent."

"If she showed you such a letter, and told you I wrote it, she told you the blackest of falsehoods!"

A sudden quiver passed over Louise's face, but she controlled herself perfectly.

"You will excuse my believing my own eyes," she said calmly. "You see, I saw it, and as it happens, I remember it distinctly, even to the date. It was written from Plymouth a week before you sailed."

"You may have seen a letter. You saw none of my writing."

"Whose was it then? The handwriting was yours. It was signed with your name."

"Ah! Whose was it?" he returned grimly.

There was a silence. Then he spoke again.

"Mrs. Dameril," he said, and his voice had a stern ring in it, quite new to her, "there are some things better not talked or thought about, if you can help it; but isn't it enough for a woman to try to spoil a man's life for him, without insulting him besides?" Before she had time to answer he was gone. She saw him join the group