

great council of the fifty chiefs of the Five Nations, formed by the hero whose deeds have been sung by Longfellow. This title Chief G. H. M. Johnson succeeded to, but his seat in the council was opposed on account of his holding a position—that of interpreter—under the Dominion Government. The matron, hearing of the contemplated action of some of the chiefs, presented herself before the next meeting of the council, and using her privilege as a peeress, spoke at length and forcibly to the assembled chiefs with the result that her son was allowed to retain his seat.

The great mental gifts of the Iroquois as a people have been the source of admiration to many great ethnologists and Indianologists, including Prof. Whitney, Prof. Max Müller and Horatio Hale, who has been already quoted. The Iroquois solved the problem of responsible government centuries before most modern civilized nations; but it is with the poetic nature of Indians that we are at present occupied. Even those having but a little sympathetic knowledge of the race know that each and every red man is innately a poet. Indians speak even the commonest communications in metaphor and allegory: their language is quite untainted by slang, profanity or bad grammar; their wood and water lore is delicate, picturesque and warmly colored. Their songs are poems, their prayers poems; in both cases a sort of blank verse chant, but with decided meter and form. It will thus be easily imagined that Miss Johnson's poetry is but the fulfilment and expression of a latent national poetry which has hitherto lacked the nourishing hand of civilization for its development.

The reader who has had the opportunity of the writer, to read and compare a large number of Miss Johnson's poems, cannot fail to be struck by the wonderful range and quality of her poetic voice. Beauty and music she has,

too, but the clear, strong, personal note which must ever be the great quality of the lyric poet is grandly developed in her.

Perhaps it first rang out with all its fulness and strength in "A Cry from an Indian Wife," published in 1885, and in relation to the Indians engaged in the North-west rebellion. Grief, tenderness, scorn and bitterness are faultlessly expressed in the fifty or more lines which it contains. Conceived with all art and dignity, the intensity of the mighty sob which throbs through the poem stirs the very fibres of those who read it—or, better still, hear Miss Johnson recite it.

About the "Cry from an Indian Wife," however, there is nothing to distinctly prove the nationality of the authoress. The burning enthusiasm in it *might* be as much the result of a strong sense of justice as of blood-sympathy; and so also in several other poems on Indian subjects, even in the case of "The Re-interment of Red Jacket," read before the Buffalo Historical Society, and in which she says—

"And few to-day remain;
But copper-tinted face and smouldering fire
Of wilder life, were left me by my sire
To be my proudest claim."

The strong qualities of these poems *might*, by one who wished to dispute the Indian character of Miss Johnson's genius, be attributed to an objective recognition and appreciation of the noble and poetic qualities of the Indian. But the poem "As Redmen Die," which was published about two years ago and aroused enthusiasm in many quarters, proved conclusively that Miss Johnson's genius was wholly Indian.

In these days, "As Redmen Die" could have been written by no one but an Indian. Entirely impersonal, there is yet more of the authoress' personality reflected in it than in any poem she has written. The mere abstract quality of virility which is usually attributed to it has been shared