

LEGENDS OF THE ILLINOIS.

STARVED ROCK is the unpoetical name of a singular spot on the Illinois river about sixty miles east of this place, and eight miles south of Ottawa. It is a rocky bluff, rising from the margin of the stream to the height of more than a hundred feet, and is only separated from the main land by a narrow chasm. Its length might probably measure two hundred and fifty feet. Its sides are perpendicular, and there is only one point where it can be ascended, and that is by a narrow stair-like path. It is covered with many a cone-like evergreen, and, in summer, encircled by luxuriant grape and ivy vines, and clusters of richly colored flowers. It is undoubtedly the most conspicuous and beautiful pictorial feature of the sluggish and lonely Illinois, down which I lately made a delightful excursion, and is associated with the final extinction of the Illinois tribe of Indians. The legend which I heard from the lips of a venerable Indian trader, is as follows :

Many years ago, the whole region lying between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi was the home and dominion of the Illinois Indians. For them alone did the buffalo and antelope range over its broad prairies ; for them did the finest of rivers roll their waters into the lap of Mexico, and bear upon their bosoms the birchen canoe, as they sought to capture the wild water fowl ; and for them alone did the dense forests, crowding upon these streams, shelter their unnumbered denizens.

In every direction might be seen the smoke of Indian wigwams curling upwards to mingle with the sunset clouds, which told them tales of the spirit land.