

Poetry.

(ORIGINAL.)

For the Canadian Illustrated News.

AN INDIAN LEGEND.

BY G. W. JOHNSON.

Tell me not of newest fashions,
Newest songs and books and stories,
Newest theories in science,
Newest gems of thought embodied,
Sparkling words of wit and wisdom,
That have scarcely cooled since uttered.

Let me hide from prying vision,
In some old neglected garret,
Filled with ancient books and stories,
Filled with manuscripts whose writers
Long have passed and been forgotten.

Let me hear in fairy fables,
How they conquered mighty giants;
That I still may love to hear them.
Give me back the days of childhood;
Or at least, the spell that bound me,
Bind again, for life is childhood,
We are children growing older.

Let me hear the tales and stories,
Ballads, songs, and wild traditions,
And Canadian, Indian legends,
Which are woven with our history;
How they hunted in the forest,
When they did, as nature taught them,
Careless, as of smile, of censure.

Deem it not an idle fancy;
Let it not appear a puzzle;
That the song which first I sing you,
Is about my native country.

Gather shells beside the ocean,
Listen to the tales they tell you;
In their mimic ocean voices
They will sing the sea forever.
Gather reeds and river-rushes,
When the gentle winds are blowing,
They will pipe you river-music.
Gather laurels from the mountain,
Fir and balsam from the forest;
When, without, the tempest howleth,
Listen to their mimic voices,
While they sing a mimic tempest.
If you cannot bribe the flowers,
Neither can you bribe the spirit,
To forget its land and nation;
To forget the tones of childhood—
In the spirit's penetralia.
Where the tones of childhood linger,
There are chambers—there are echoes
That will ring them out forever.

Should you ask me where I heard it,
Heard this little simple story,
Heard this song of Canadansis,
I would answer, by the river,
In the forest, on the mountain,
Heard it, when the night-winds waken,
Heard it in the ocean's murmur,
Heard it by the big-sea-waters,
Heard it from a thousand voices
In the thunders of Niagara.
Should you ask me where it happened,
This would be, my only answer,
At the home of Canadansis.
Should you ask me how it happened
I would answer, read his story:

SONG OF COMA CANADANSIS.

Lights of many days and summers
On the wings of time have faded,
Since the hunter of the mountain
And the hunter of the valley
Lived in peace, and feared no evil;
When the beaver and the otter
Built their homes beside the river,
Lived and played among the waters;
When the deer in herds around us,
White gazelles, that left the mountains,
Chose our children for their playmates;
When the year was always summer,
And the chilly winds of winter
Had not yet been breathed upon us;
And the sunshine always lingered,
Till the full-orb'd moon, ascending
Joined the twilight on so closely,
That the eye could scarce discover,
When the light of day had faded;
And the gentle zephyrs, blowing
O'er the mighty big-sea-water,
Wafted tones and spirit voices
From the land, no mortal knoweth;
And the sky was hanging downward,
That the hand might almost touch it.
On the sacred Manitoulin,
Island in the big-sea-water,
Manitou, the mighty spirit,
Placed a white deer, sacra cervina—
Cerva white as foam of ocean,
When the tempest winds are raging,
Years rolled on and still it lingered,
Garboiled in its home of flowers.
Coronora, from the southland,
From a nation that we hated,

Came by night to Manitoulin—
Island in the big-sea-water,
Killed the white deer, sacra cervina,
Then departed for the mountains.

All at once the big-sea-water,
Boiled and foamed and dashed in fury,
Manitou, Great Spirit, heard it.
First he set the sky on fire
With his winged forked lightnings;
Then the night grew dark and dismal,
And a voice from out the darkness
Spoke as loud as loudest thunder,
When it roars among the mountains.

Wicked people, I have kept you
Many thousand years in pleasure;
All I asked, that you should render,
Was the white deer, sacra cervina,
Should be free to roam the meadows,
And should dwell among the flowers.
But my wishes were not heeded,
Therefore, I will smile no longer,
I will frown, and clouds shall gather
Over all the face of nature,
And the balmy winds of summer
Shall be changed to dreary winter;
(For till then the winds of winter
Had not blown on Manitoulin)
That your children may remember,
That their fathers once were happy,
That the land was as a garden,
As it might have bloomed, forever.
When the summer is declining,
And the sun has wandered southward,
I will give the Indian summer,
Such as used to smile upon you.
When the Indian summer cometh
Pleasant-scented myrrh and cedar
From the forest and the mountain,
Ye shall gather, burn before me.
Ye shall bring your fairest maidens,
And the fairest of the number
Ye shall place upon the waters;
Place upon the big-sea-water,
In a white canoe shall place her;
I will guide her, I will take her
To the land of happy spirits—
To the blooming fields Elysian.

Then the mighty big-sea-water
Ceased to roll, and stilled its thunder,
And the day began to brighten,
But alas! the winds of winter,
Cold and cruelly were blowing,
And the sky had risen higher,
And the deer and birds and heavens
Sought the forest when they saw us.
Manitou had planted thistles,
Planted thorns and bitter apples,
Poison mellons by the river,
Sent the hungry wolf and panther
Sent disease and death among us.

Coronora, hated stranger,
Sought the mountain and the wildwood,
Hungered, thirsted, in the forest,
Wandered up and down the forest,
Many miles from Manitoulin.
For the sound of rushing water
Lured him far, and called him farther,
Till at last an open desert
Spread itself away before him,
Spread itself behind, beside him.
Far he wandered, weak, and weary,
In a desert land enchanted,
Over rocks, and reeds and rushes,
Tangled thorns, and briar bushes;
Not a single blossom blowing,
Not a single river flowing,
But a noon-tide heat is glowing,
And the sun in anger shining,
Burns into the brain a fever:
All the ground is parched and arid,
And the thirsty one is cheated,
By the sound of many waters,
For this desert land, enchanted,
By the singing sands is haunted,
And the singing sands can mimic
Anything the heart desires:
If you're famishing for water,
They will sing it; if you follow,
Straightway, they will sing of waters
In a different direction;
If the noon-tide heat oppress you,
And you fain would feel the breezes
Sweetly fan your fevered temples,
Quick as thought, you hear a murmur,
As of gentle zephyrs blowing;
Follow thither, and it changes.
'Tis the singing sands that mock you,
With their sounds of empty meaning;
Do you hunger? berry bushes,
Covered thick with luscious berries,
At the wayside, seem to flourish;
If you turn aside to pluck them,
They will vanish as a shadow,
Or appear a little onward;
Follow thither, they retire.

Thus the hunger, famished pilgrim,
Never guessing of deception
Follows the enchanted berries,

Till the gloom of night surrounds him;
Grasping after golden apples,
That are very fair and lovely,
But when taken in the fingers,
Suddenly are turned to ashes.

Thus the hated Coronora
Wandered up and down the desert,
Mocked and bruised in hidden pit-falls.
Till at last his strength forsook him,
And his spirit, too, forsook him,
But the singing sands were present,
Lured his spirit to the regions
Of perpetual gloom and sorrow.

On the mighty big-sea-water,
On the Manitoulin island,
Lived Oranta, mighty hunter,
Laughed and never thought of sorrow.
Every body loved his daughter—
Daughter to the great Oranta—
Lena fairer than the flowers,
That she used to train in summer.
Great Oranta danced the war dance,
Made a feast to all the warriors.
I had seen the gentle Lena,
Saw her at her father's wigwam,
Where I won the heart of Lena:
And Oranta smiled upon us,
For he knew we loved each other.

Oh how sad the summer ended,
For my darling one was chosen;
All our hearts were full of sorrow,
But the white canoe was painted,
And our Lena placed within it;
Out upon the big-sea-water,
Rode the white canoe and maiden;
Not a paddle moved about it,
Scarcely did it kiss the waters,
To the right hand never turned it,
To the left hand never turned it,
But it swiftly hurried onward;
To the sunny southland rode it,
Till away upon the waters,
As a speck upon the ocean,
In the mighty distance seemed it.
Manitou was watching for it,
Ere the Indian summer faded.
Great Oranta had departed
To the happy land of spirits.
Many days and nights I waited,
Many weary years I waited,
But the white canoe and maiden
Never came across the waters,
Back across the big-sea-water,
To the heart of Canadansis.

You have heard it, you have read it,
Read this strange and wild tradition;
Judge it at your heart's dictation,
Not with cold and cruel censure.
It's as my father told it,
As his father's father told it,
Told this ancient, Indian legend,
Told of Coma Canadansis.

Binbrook, April 8th, 1863.

SOME things come by odd names. The most uncommon quality in a man is called 'common sense'; a paper half a mile long is a 'brief,' and a melancholy ditty, devoid of sense or meaning is called a 'glee.'

'SAY, Pete Johnson, is swords 'bolished in the army?'
'Ob course dey isn't, Snowball; what makes you ax setch a stoopid question, you ignomant niggah?'
'O! nuffin, only I heard todder day dat five thousand sogers was goin' to take the field with Sickles.'

I was once standing by the grave of my departed children, under a brilliant sun and cloudless sky, when suddenly a light shadow passed over the green turf. Looking up for the cause, I beheld a snow-white gull winging her lofty flight through the air. The thought immediately struck me—thus it is with the dear objects of my mournful remembrance. Here, indeed, lies the shadow, but above is the living principle.—MORAVIAN MISSIONARY IN LABRADOR.

It was customary years ago to publish from the pulpit, in Connecticut, bans of matrimony. On one occasion an old man rose and said, 'I forbid the bans.' On being asked to state his objections, he replied, 'I had reserved Dinah Curtis for myself.' The objection was not deemed 'good.'

Mrs. SMILES says the reason children are so bad this generation is owing to the wearing of the gaiter shoes, instead of the old fashioned slippers. Mothers find it too much trouble to untie gaiters to whip children, so they go unpunished; but when she was a child the way the slipper used to do its duty was a caution!

Pretty; and Pretty Good.

'I burn my soul away,'
So spake the Rose, and smiled; 'within my cup,
All day the sunbeams full in flame—all day
They drink my sweetness up!'

'I sigh my soul away,'
The Lilly said; 'all night the moonbeams pale
Steal round and round me, whispering in their play
An all too tender tale!'

'I give my soul away,'
The Violet said; 'the west wind wanders on,
The north wind comes; I know not what they say,
And yet my soul is gone!'

Oh, Poet, burn away.
Thy fervent soul I fondly love, at the left,
Of all thou lovest, sigh dear Christian, pray,
And let the world be sweet!

LET your promises be sincere, and so prudently considered as not to exceed the reach of your ability; he who promises more than he can perform is false to himself; he who does not perform what he has promised is false to his friends.

A DIAMOND is a diamond, though you put it on the finger of a beggar—only that on the finger of a beggar nobody would believe it a diamond. Does not mendicant genius every day offer the precious jewel in its head for sale, and yet, because the holder is mendicant, does not the world believe the jewel to be of no value? Men have died with jewels in their brains, and not until the men were dead were the gems owned to be true water.—JERROLD.

DURING a marriage ceremony performed by one of the dissenting ministers of the Elgin Presbytery lately, the bride was sobbing immoderately while the knot was being tied. 'What's the matter, my young woman?' asked the official. 'Oh, sir,' replied the bride, 'it's because it's forever!' 'No, no,' rejoined the minister, 'that's a mistake—a great mistake, it's not forever. Death puts an end to the engagement.' On hearing this the bride dried up her tears and was consoled.

RAINY WEATHER, at the end of May, and in first week of June, 1863, is verified as follows, by whom we cannot tell:—

We got our summer pantaloons
A week ago, on Monday,
And we have never had a chance
To wear them on a Sunday.

It's time for all the pleasant things;
For walking, riding, training;
But there is nothing in the world
But raining, raining, raining.

The weather-cock has rusted out,
The blue sky is forgotten,
The earth is a saturated sponge,
And vegetation's rotten.

We hate to see the darkest side,
We hate to be complaining;
But hang us if our temper stands
This raining, raining, raining.

I HAVE sat upon the seashore and waited for its gradual approaches, and have seen its dancing waves and white surf, and admired that he who measured it with His hand had given to it such life and motion; and I have lingered till its gentle waters grew into mighty billows, and well nigh swept me from firmest footing. So I have seen a heedless youth gazing with a too curious spirit upon the sweet motions and gentle approaches of inviting pleasure, till it has detained his eye and imprisoned his feet and swelled upon his soul, and swept him to a swift destruction.—BASIL MONTAGUE.

A SCOTCH proprietor seeing an old gardener of his establishment with a very old patched, though not ragged, coat, made some passing remark on his condition. 'It's a vera guid coat,' said the honest old man. 'I canna agree with you there,' said his lordship. 'Ay, it's just a vera guid coat; it covers a contented spirit and a body that owes no man anything, and that's mair than mony a man can say o' their coat.'

A YOUNG man who applied at a recruiting station for enlistment was asked if he could sleep on the point of a bayonet, when he promptly replied by saying he could do it, as he had often slept on a pint of whisky, and the kind they used where he came from would kill farther than any shooting-iron he ever saw.

AT Bristol, England, a tavern-keeper, uniting business with patriotism, hung out a banner, on the Prince's marriage day, inscribed:—'A sandwich and a glass of beer for 3d. Bless them both.'