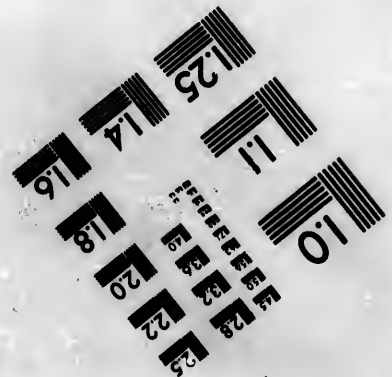
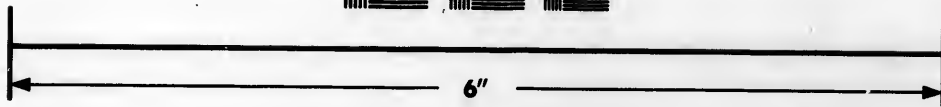
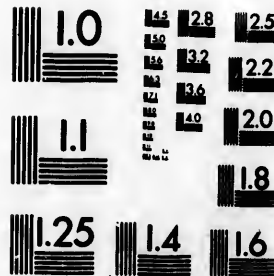


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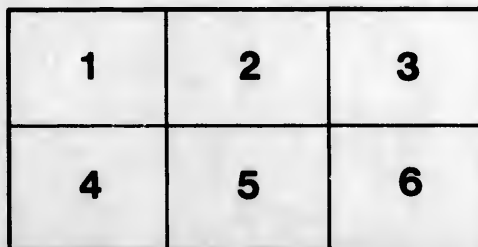
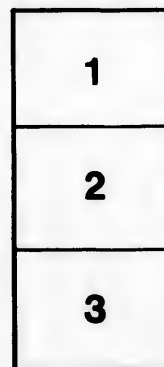
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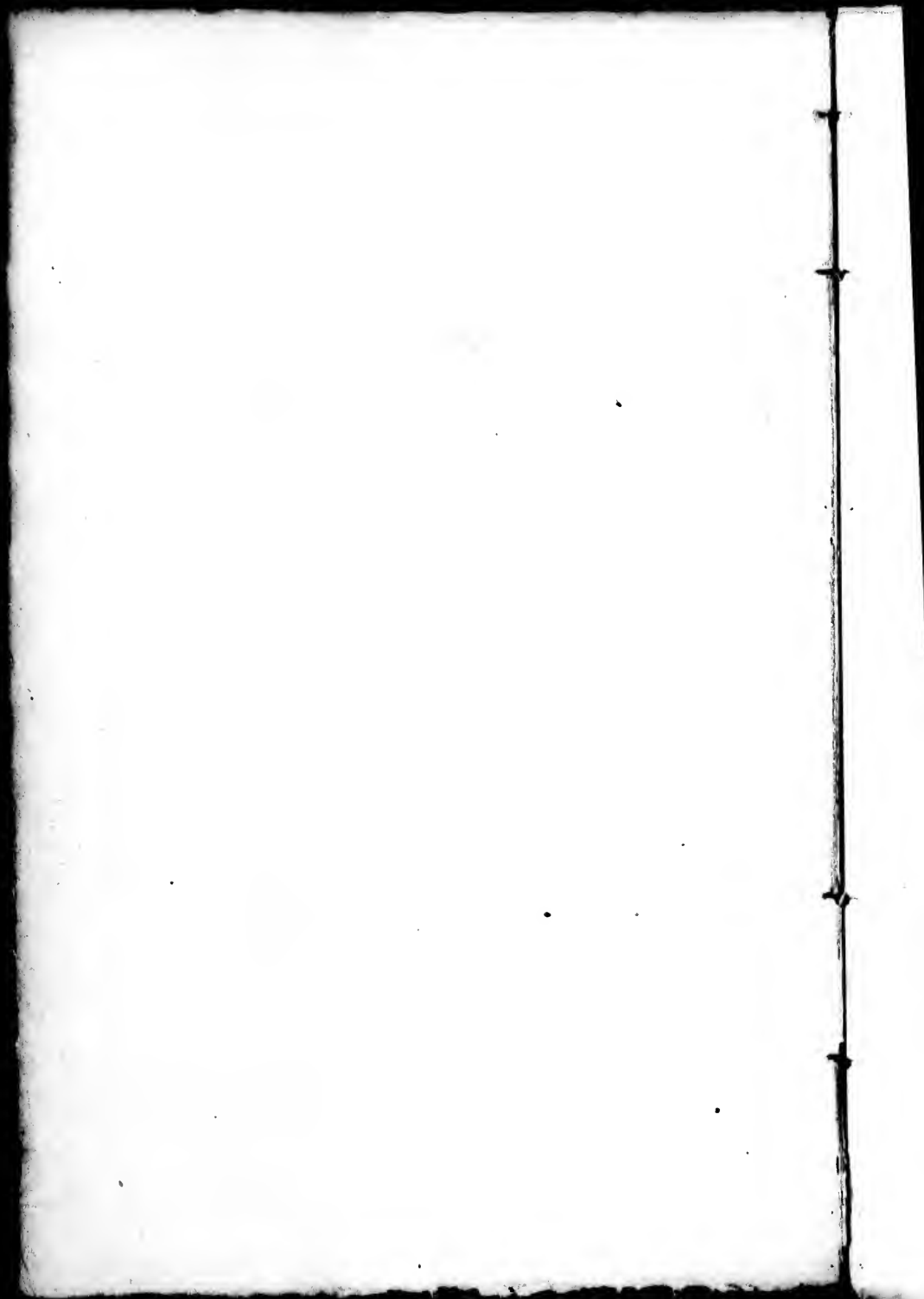
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*David Crowther*

**ONTWA,**  
**THE**  
**SON OF THE FOREST.**

**A POEM.**

"Il parle ainsi au bruit de l'onde, et au milieu de toute la solitude," *Chateaubriand.*

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*Clerk of the Southern District of New-York.*

## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE following brief extracts contain almost the only historical traces of that tribe of Indians, whose catastrophe suggested the principal incidents of ONTWA.

“About this time (1653) the Iroquois so effectually exterminated a nation called the *Eries*, that no traces of them now remain; nor could it be known that they ever had existed, were it not for the great lake, on the borders of which they were situated, and which, for that reason, still bears their name. The Iroquois, at the beginning of the war, were worsted; but they pursued it with such unrelenting fury, as to effect the catastrophe we have mentioned.”—*Wynne's General History of the British Empire in America*, Vol. I. p. 334.

“Ce fût à peu près dans ce tems (1655) que les Iroquois achevèrent de détruire la nation des Erietz, ou du Chat. Les commencemens de cette guerre ne leur avoient pas été favorable; mais ils ne rebutèrent point, et ils prirent à la fin



tellement le dessus, que sans le grand lac, que porte encore aujourd'hui le nom de cette nation, on ne sauroit pas même qu'elle eût existé."—*Charlevoix, Histoire de la Nouvelle France*, Tom. I. p. 322.

Both these accounts leave the residence of this tribe somewhat indeterminate. Charlevoix, in his maps, places it on the south side of Lake Erie; other old French maps place it on the north side, and even indicate the spot where the fatal battle was fought. The latter authority has been adopted in the following work—whether correctly or not, it is presumed to be of little consequence. The apparent anachronism of deciding its fate by one single battle, when perhaps a series of actions were fought, may probably be likewise thought as unimportant. Such a supposition better subserved the purposes of poetry; and the obscurity of history seemed to admit of almost any latitude of conjecture.

At the period here alluded to, the French missionaries commenced their bold and generous pilgrimages among the remote tribes of the American interior. It need scarcely be remarked, that

it is one of those daring philanthropists, who is represented in the Introduction.

With respect to the composition of *ONTWA*, the same remark may be applied to it which Chateaubriand applies to *Atala*, that "it was written in the desert, and under the huts of the savages." This circumstance, however, can give it no correspondent merit with that beautiful and pathetic little work, other than the chance of being equally faithful in the description of aboriginal manners and scenes. The tradition on which the story of *ONTWA* is founded, unavoidably led to an apparent adoption of one of the incidents of *Atala*. Without anticipating a charge of plagiarism, it may perhaps be confessed, that, in this instance, an attempt was made to imitate its eloquent author.

ERRATA.

Page 44, l. 13—read *charms* instead of “charm.”

l. 14—read *harms* instead of “harm.”

Page 66, note—read *culm* instead of “clear.”

Page 73, l. 16—after “And” dele comma (in some copies)  
to read, *And vanquish'd, &c.*

# ONTWA.

## PART I.

### INTRODUCTION.

PILORIM from transatlantic climes,  
Of elder race and elder times,  
Where age on age had roll'd around  
In hemispheric circle bound,  
Unconscious that a sister sphere,  
Revolving through the same career  
And glowing 'neath the same bright sun,  
Had still concurrent ages run,—

I launch'd before the western gales,  
(Dilating now a thousand sails,) *his*  
Which, ere th' immortal Genoese  
Had dared to span unmeasured seas  
In search of worlds *his* mighty mind  
Alone conceived the hope to find,  
Had idly swept a rolling waste  
That pilot keel had never traced.

No scheme sublime like his was mine—  
The balanced globe such grand design  
Excludes again—and his great name,  
That fills the younger world with fame,  
Must still unrival'd stand, till earth  
Shall to new continents give birth.

I sought no undiscover'd shore  
Which prow had never touch'd before ;  
Nor wish'd presumptuous course to urge  
Beyond De Gama's daring verge—  
Nor yet, like Magalhaen, to run  
Still following round the setting sun,  
Till my bold keel should leave a trace  
Folding the globe in its embrace.  
No—'twas a spirit mild and meek,  
That objects less sublime would seek :  
I sought the Indian of the wild,  
Nature's forlorn and roving child—  
Already driven, from shores afar  
Where once he bore the chase and war,  
To Western Lakes : those seas confined,  
Which ancient deluge left behind  
When the vast floodgates of the land,  
Unable longer to withstand  
The rolling waste, crumbled away  
And gave the sweeping ruin play—

Leaving the wide interior dram'd  
Save where these remnant floods remain'd.

I ask'd the red man for my guide :  
He launch'd his bark on Erie's tide,—  
Through all the liquid chain we ran,  
O'er Huron's wave, and Michi'gan,  
Veering amid her linked isles  
Where the mechanic beaver toils,—\*  
Still floating on, in easy way  
Into her deep indented Bay,†  
Through rocky isles whose bolder forms  
Are chafed and fritter'd down by storms,  
And, worn to steeps of varying shape  
That architectural orders ape,  
Show ruin'd column, arch and niche,  
And wall's dilapidated breach ;  
With ivy hanging from above,  
And plants below, that ruins love,

\* Now called the Beaver Islands—in Lake Michi-egan,  
(or Great Lake,) as named by the natives.

† Called Green Bay, whose mouth is almost closed by a  
chain of Islands, called the Grand Traverse. Their sides are  
high, rocky, and bold; and, being of limestone, have been worn  
into a thousand fantastic shapes, which, even without the aid  
of fancy, assume the appearances described in the text.

Drooping in melancholy grace  
 On broken frize and mould'ring base ;  
 While here and there, like drifts of snow,  
 Amid the waves the white rocks show,  
 Stripp'd of their soil and left all bare,  
 As bones of islands bleaching there.

Far up the lengthen'd bay we urge,  
 To where the triple streams converge  
 And on its reedy head distil  
 The tribute sent from distant hill—  
 Now mounting up the sinuous bed  
 Of Wagouche to its marshy head,  
 We toil against the foamy leaps—\*  
 Or wind where still the current sleeps  
 Mid seas of grain,† the boon of heaven  
 To sterile climes in bounty given.  
 At last we reach the narrow mound—  
 The wide diverging waters bound—  
 Where, almost mingling as they glide  
 In smooth and counter-current tide,

\* Called *Saults* by the inhabitants—and sometimes *Chutes*.  
 —'La Grande Chute' is here alluded to.—Wagouche is one  
 of the Indian names for the Fox river. It receives, just as it  
 falls into the head of Green Bay, the addition of two rivers.

† The Fols-avoine—fatua avena, or wild rice, which grows  
 in great abundance in the Fox river.

Two rivers turn in sever'd race,  
And flow, with still enlarging space,  
Till one rolls down beneath the north  
And pours its icy torrent forth,  
While—glowing as it hurries on—  
The other seeks a southern zone.\*  
Here, as the heaven dissolves in showers,  
The boon on either stream it pours,  
And the same sunbeams, as they stray,  
On both with light impartial play ;  
But onward as each current hies,  
New climes and sunder'd tropicks rise,  
And, urging, growing, as they run,  
Each follows down a varying sun,  
Till, o'er her tepid Delta spread,  
The Michi-sipi bows her head,—  
While Lawrence vainly strives to sweep  
His gelid surface to the deep.  
Scarce did the low and slender neck  
The progress of our passage check ;  
And ere our bark—which, dripping, bore  
The marks of rival waters o'er—

\* The Portage of the Fox and Onisconsin rivers, by which they are separated, is only a mile and a half. These rivers, though here nearly united, discharge their waters into the sea at points between three and four thousand miles apart.



Had lost in air its humid stain,  
'Twas launch'd, and floating on again—  
Mid isles in willow'd beauty dress'd  
That deck'd Ouisconsin's yellow breast.

The stream ran fast, and soon the scene  
Changed into frowns; its smiles serene.  
Nature arose in troubled mood,  
And hills and cliffs, of aspect rude,  
Hoary with barrenness, save where  
The stunted cedar hung in air  
Fix'd in the rocks that beetled high,  
Darken'd the current rushing by—  
Oft choked and broken in its pass  
By mighty fragments' clogging mass,  
Sever'd, mayhap, by bolt of heaven,  
And down the steep in thunder driven.

Our rapid bark, ere twice the day  
Had shone upon its downward way,  
Turn'd its light prow, in upward course,  
To stem the Michi-sipi's force—  
Where her broad wave rolls on amaju,  
Sever'd by ' thousand isles' in twain,  
And giant cliffs, with threatening frown,  
Conduct her prison'd current down.

Full many a stream, on either side,  
Through the cleft walls sends forth its tide,  
Descending far from distant plains,  
Where in its gloom the Prairie reigns,  
Seated in grandeur on its throne  
Amid a desert world alone.  
Oft up the steep, by rugged path  
Sloped by the winter torrent's wrath,  
We toil'd, where high the sumach hung,  
And tendril vines around it clung,  
Checking our way with woven bowers,  
Or twining over head their flowers ;  
While higher still, in dizzier break,  
The trembling aspen tree would shake—  
And oft the wand'ring eye would meet  
With sparkling crystals 'neath the feet,  
Rudely enchased on some dark stone  
Shining with lustre not its own.  
Hard the ascent, but fair the sight  
That spread beneath the lofty height,  
Where river, isles, and meadows drew  
Their varied pictures to the view,—  
Or would the downward eye forbear  
To dwell on scene so soft and fair,  
'Twas but to raise a level glance  
And all was rude and bold at once,

Where the dark Bluffs, half bare, half  
crown'd,  
Arose in gloomy sternness 'round.

For many a day the stream we stemm'd,  
Through isles that still its bosom gemm'd,  
While oft, where back the cliffs retired,  
The waving plain, in green attired,  
Smiled in the dark and deep recess,  
Like guarded spot in wilderness ;  
(Where Hamadryades might sport,  
Or Fairies hold their dewy court.)

At last our bark, mid eddies toss'd  
And foam that all the wave emboss'd,  
Was warn'd—ere yet the torrent's roar  
Was heard—to turn its keel ashore.  
Now clambering up the steep ascent,  
Our course along the brink was bent,  
Where the descending, broken flood,  
On rocks that firm its force withstood,  
Show'd signs of mightier conflict near  
Whose rumblings now rose on the ear.

Why checks my guide on yonder rise,  
And bends to earth in mute surprise,

As the Great Spirit of the air  
Had burst upon his vision there ?  
'Twas the vast Cataract\* that threw  
Its broad effulgence o'er his view,  
Like sheet of silver hung on high  
And glittering 'neath the northern sky.  
Nor think that Pilgrim eyes could dwell  
On the bright torrent as it fell,  
With soul unawed. We look'd above  
And saw the waveless channel move,  
Fill'd from the fountains of the north  
And sent through varied regions forth,  
Till, deep and broad and placid grown,  
It comes in quiet beauty down—  
Unconscious of the dizzy steep  
O'er which its current soon must sweep.  
The eye hung shudd'ring on the brink,  
As it had powerless wish to shrink,  
Then instant sunk, where mid the spray,  
All the bright sheet in ruin lay.  
The tumult swells, and on again  
The eddying waters roll amain,

\* The Falls of St. Anthony, first discovered and named  
by father Hennipen.

Still foaming down in angry pride,  
Till mingling rivers smooth its tide.  
Nor did the isle, whose promont wedge  
Hangs on the torrent's dizzy edge,  
Escape the view ; nor sister twin  
That smiles amid the nether din—  
Closed in the raging flood's embrace,  
And free from human footstep's trace ;  
Where the proud Eagle builds his throne,  
And rules in majesty alone.\*  
Approaching still, and more entranced  
As still the ling'ring step advanced,  
We stood at last in pleased delay  
O'erlooking all the bright display,  
While the gay tints of western flame  
That down the day's obliqueness came,  
On hanging sheet and level stream  
Darted a soft and slanting beam.  
While thus we paused, bent o'er a rock  
Whose tremours own'd the general shock,  
The wand'ring vision chanced to meet—  
Fix'd like a statue on its seat

\* Carver says that the small island, at the foot of these Falls, is inaccessible to man and beast, and that almost every tree upon it sustains the ery of an eagle.

Of jutting fragment, whither flew  
The torrent spray in silvery dew—  
An Indian form. No motion told  
That 'twas not some unbreathing mould  
Which savage chisel might have traced  
And near the sacred cascade\* placed.  
We nearer drew, when clearer sight  
Truly betray'd a living wight—  
Yet lost so deep in musings wild,  
And by the torrent so beguiled,  
That scarce his breathings seem'd his own  
But motion caught from trembling stone.  
Hail'd by my guide, in well-known tongue,  
He turn'd, and back his dark locks flung,  
Raising an eye—though now sunk deep  
By woes, perhaps too strong to weep—  
That still shone forth with ray intense,  
As wont a spirit to condense,  
Whose ardent energies had felt  
All that could fire, or rend, or melt.  
Familiar speech and forest guise  
Appear'd to wake but short surprise ;

\* The Indians believe the Falls of St. Anthony to be the residence of the Great Spirit.

And calmly he had turn'd again  
To fall anew in musing train,  
When his fierce eye just caught the trace  
Of white man in the Pilgrim's face.  
Reviving mem'ry seem'd to read  
Some story there, of wo or dread ;  
And quickly, as his brain were fired  
With anguish that the view inspired,  
And his worn form no more could bear  
The struggles of some deep despair,  
He sunk to earth in prostrate grief  
Ere friendly arm could give relief.

What boots it that the tale should say  
What hours or suns were pass'd away  
In soothing kindness by the guide,  
With pitying Pilgrim by his side,  
Ere that the Forest son arose  
And told his tale of many woes ?

## ONTWA.

### PART II.

'LAST of my tribe—a mighty race !—  
My wand'ring feet have sought this place,  
Where the Great Spirit rolls his wave,  
To find a lone and sacred grave.  
Why does the welcome hour delay,  
That sends my wearied soul away ?  
When will the thund'ring waters close  
Over the last of Erie's woes,  
And waft down Ontwa to the land  
Where, risen again, the Erie band  
On brighter streams and fairer plain  
Renew the war and chase again ?\*

\* The Indians have but vague notions of their *posthumous* destiny ; but as they believe the sports most valued in this life, such as war and the chase, are continued after death, they generally place their heaven either within the earth, or in some distant place upon it, as being better suited to such occupations than the undefined regions above.



There my great sire, with chiding eyes,  
Impatient turns to upper skies  
And asks the tardy hour to come,  
That brings his ling'ring offspring home.  
He counts his tribe—still misses one,  
And seeks in vain his absent son,—  
The last sad remnant of his kind,  
Condemn'd to wander yet behind.  
But oh! a spirit still more fair  
Awaits to welcome Ontwa there,—  
Whose beauty sprung from eastern light,  
Just glitter'd on my forest sight,  
Then sunk, alas! in sudden night.

Why should my gloomy soul recall,  
Or Ontwa's love, or Erie's fall?  
But 'tis my vow to bear my grief,  
Nor seek the balsam of relief:  
I've sworn to wear th' envenom'd dart  
Still rankling in my aching heart,  
And join my love on plains below,  
With all the anguish of my wo;  
Nor bear one thought whose cheering ray  
Might gleam upon my darkling way,  
Or chance to break the sacred gloom  
That shrouds my passage to the tomb.

'Twill but revive a deeper wail,—  
Then why refuse to tell my tale ?  
Haply the shrunken cords of life—  
Too weak to bear the inward strife—  
May sever ere the tale shall close :  
Would that I thus could meet repose,  
And with one agonizing sigh  
Breathe out my many woes, and die.

Scarce twice twelve seasons now have shed  
Their bloom, or blight, on Ontwa's head.  
My sire, Kaskaskia, reign'd supreme  
O'er all the tribes on hill and stream,  
From distant Huron's stormy shore  
To where Niag'ra's thunders roar ;  
While Erie and Ontario's wave,  
To swell his power, their tribute gave,  
And oft had borne to shores afar  
His thousand barks in daring war. .  
Deep in the centre of his bands,  
On lofty height, which far commands,  
He placed his smoke,\* whose rising spire  
For ever told Kaskaskia's fire.

\* A fire, or smoke, in the figurative language of the savages, denotes a residence or settlement.

Here oft the grand debate arose  
Which doom'd the fate of neighb'ring foes ;  
And here, to warm the list'ning young  
And nerve their hearts but newly strung,  
The old, exposing all their scars,  
Would tell the tale of Erie's wars ;  
Till, like a tipp'd and feather'd dart  
Ready from bended bow to start,  
Their youthful hearts would pant to wear  
The trophied skin of elk or bear,  
And see the foe, in fancied fight,  
Already conquer'd, or in flight.

A mighty oak, whose spreading arms  
Had stood the brunt of tempest harms  
Unnumber'd snows,\* and still could bring  
Its verdant tribute to the spring,  
Upon the highest summit stood,  
A beacon midst the sea of wood ;  
Some grey and splinter'd boughs were seen  
Shooting athwart its ample green,—  
Not the hoar emblems of decay,  
But wrecks of lightning's wrathful play,

\* The savages number the lapse of years by snows, or winters.

Scars on a brow too often driven  
 Against the warring powers of heaven.  
 No other tree nor shrub was there ;  
 The hill-top else were bleak and bare ;  
 And, save the scanty moss which grew  
 Beneath the shade its foliage threw,  
 No green relieved the rocky waste  
 Which round its brow a fillet traced,  
 Like mighty band of wampum,\* spread  
 Around a giant's plumed head.

Now had the hazel given its die†  
 Full eighteen springs to Ontwa's eye,  
 And this young arm, with growing nerve,  
 Had learnt the twanging bow to serve,  
 And many a deer had lent its horn  
 My sportive triumphs to adorn ;  
 When, mid his chiefs, I saw my sire  
 Awake on high the council fire.  
 And, as the dark ascending smoke  
 Curl'd upwards round the lofty oak,  
 He rose amid the circling crowd  
 With eye severe, shook off the shroud—

\* The Wampum is made of strings of beads, which the  
 Indians use for purposes of ornament, &c.

† The predominant colour of the Indian's eye is a dark hazel.

A skin of Buffalo—that dress'd  
The broad dimension of his breast ;  
And while the hand that grasps the bow  
Braced 'round the ample folds below,  
The arm that guides the arrow hung  
All free to aid his speaking tongue.  
Ere that the deep and labouring speech,  
As slow to rise, his lips could reach,  
His lofty gesture led the eye  
To send a trembling glance on high.  
While yet, as with a powerful charm,  
Each feeling hung upon his arm,  
A mountain cloud was seen to rise  
Fast from the depths of eastern skies,  
Like mighty barrier in the way,  
Threat'ning to close the gates of day.  
Its towering peak and spreading base,  
Still rolling up the azure space,  
With fast increasing horrors grew ;  
Till half the heavens were veil'd from view,  
And day's broad eye, closed in a frown,  
No longer on the world look'd down.  
Unmoved, alone Kaskaskia stood,  
And all the spreading fury view'd  
With steady eye, while the bright glare  
Of forked lightning seam'd the air.

With voice, that still was loudly heard  
Amid the turbulence that stirr'd  
The heavens to war, he thus express'd  
The dark forebodings of his breast.  
" Three times the east, array'd in storms,  
Has fill'd my dreams with deep alarms ;  
Three times this cloud, in vision'd wrath,  
Has darkly cross'd my dreaming path,  
While the Great Spirit, as it pass'd,  
Has spoke in thunders from the blast.  
Know, mighty chiefs, the hour is come  
That threatens Erie's final doom.  
The evil Manitou\* this hour  
Leads hitherward a mighty power—  
A power of overwhelming might—  
Which, coming from the fount of light,  
By white man's vengeful arm oppress'd,  
Seeks out a refuge in the west.  
Great Saranac, whose skill and force  
Tower supreme like eagle's course,  
Leads on the first ; and many a band  
Is leagued beneath his strong command,—  
All sworn to quench their ancient fires  
Where sleep the ashes of their sires,

\* Manitou means Spirit, as Michi-Manitou—Great Spirit—and Kichi-Manitou, Evil Spirit.

Nor ask again the kindling sun  
Till Erie's forest shores be won.  
Already by the fav'ring wind  
They leave the Iroquois\* behind,—  
And plying still the active oar,  
Sweep up Ontario's farther shore,  
Resolved to cross as soon as sight  
Shall catch the view of adverse height :†  
Perchance already o'er the lake  
Their bold and hostile course they take.

Thus the Great Spirit, in my dreams,  
Spoke mid the stormy lightning's gleams ;  
And now again he speaks to all,  
Darkly foretelling Erie's fall.  
Yon rolling cloud, which low'ring spreads,  
Suspending ruin o'er our heads,  
Erelong will give its thunders birth,  
And bound in fury to our earth :—  
Thus Saranac with hostile bands  
Will soon descend on Erie's lands.  
But though it be the doom of Heaven,  
Shall Erie hence be tamely driven,—

\* The Indian name of the St. Lawrence.

† From the heights of Queenston may be seen those of  
York, U. C.

Cut off from hills our sires have ranged  
Till seasons have, forgotten, changed,  
And countless snows, like marks of time,  
Have melted from their peaks sublime ?  
Shall we unstring the stubborn bow,  
And all our ancient chase forego,  
The Erie's boon since times far gone,  
When the huge mammoth, overthrown  
For proudly daring Heaven to war,  
O'er the great waters fled afar ?  
No—as this head would stand unbow'd  
Though yonder black and threaten'g cloud  
Should launch its heaviest bolt, and make  
This hill-top to its centre shake—  
So will Kaskaskia raise his arm  
To shield you from impending harm."

While yet his arm, of nervous strength,  
Was raised aloft in daring length,  
The ruptured cloud sent forth a flash  
Which, ere the warning thunder's crash  
Was heard, in crackling fury broke  
On the broad frontlet of the oak.  
Prostrate the crowd in tremour sunk,  
Clinging to rocks that quaked and shrunk,



Nor saw, till from the hills around  
Echo return'd her faintest sound,  
That still Kaskaskia held his brow  
Erect beneath the awful blow :  
And though his arm, which had been raised  
Just as the vivid lightning blazed,  
Now, wither'd, by his quiver hung  
Like hunter's nervous bow unstrung ;  
Yet high was fix'd his steady eye  
On the fierce conflict of the sky,  
As he would mock, in proud despair,  
The fate proclaim'd in thunder there.

With proud, yet pitying eye, he saw  
The crowd dejected thus with awe,  
And, half reproving, bade them rise,  
Nor sink beneath the angry skies.  
“ Let not the Erie warrior droop—  
Arise, to war—with fellest whoop !  
Speed ! Every chief his subjects wake !  
The barbed dart and war club take—  
And, on those heights which catch the ray  
Of blue Ontario's setting day,  
Collect and hold your faithful bands ;  
There wait your coming chief's commands,—

Nor will Kaskaskia's eagle plume  
Fail at the signal hour to come.  
Mean-time, from lofty capes where raves  
The whirlwind over Erie's waves,  
I'll seek, amid the howling storm,  
The Manitou's appalling form ;  
And learn from blasts the deepest fate  
Which Erie's fortunes may await."

He ceased—when every chief in haste  
His quiver hung, and wampum braced,  
And o'er his shoulders loosely spread  
His skin, as if for march of speed,—  
And then, like herd of scatter'd deer,  
Surprised by ambush'd hunter near,  
That bounding off in antler'd pride  
Flies to the wood on every side,  
They darted down the hill amain  
And soon were crossing level plain—  
Their feather'd crests, in buoyant grace,  
Dancing with every springing pace,  
Marking afar their various ways  
Till lost within the woody maze.

\* \* \*

"Ontwa! the lightning lent its gleam  
But to confirm Kaskaskia's dream :

Three times the Manitou has given  
My dreaming ear the will of heaven ;  
Yet will Kaskaskia never yield  
Save in the bloody battle field.  
Springing from lands which stretch afar  
Where coldly shines the moveless star,  
Erie's bold race by conquest won  
These milder regions of the sun.  
A proud and mighty race—so says  
Tradition of forgotten days—  
Then ruled these Lakes ; with cunning blest  
In arts and arms o'er all the west,—  
As still appears from square and line  
Of warlike aspect and design,  
Whose lengthen'd trench and mound enseat  
The banks of many a winding stream,  
Muskingum and Ohio fair,  
Spreading o'er plain and hillock there—  
Though worn and crumbled now by time,  
And bearing trees, of height sublime,  
Offspring, perhaps, of elder shade  
That there has flourish'd and decay'd.

The Erie bands, though all unskill'd  
In arts and arms, and trenched field—

Nor other shield or weapon knew  
Than naked breast and arrow true,  
Yet far in strength and valour rose  
Above their more experienced foes.  
Full many a snow on hill and plain  
Descended and dissolved again,  
Ere that the contest, fierce and long,  
Between the skilful and the strong,  
Was closed ; and many a mound may still  
Be seen on time-worn plain and hill,—  
Once red with blood,—that mould'ring tell  
Where thousands fought, and thousands fell.  
At last, great Areouski's\* might  
Was leagued with Erie in the fight—  
Who drove afar the remnant bands  
To find new homes in other lands,  
And leave to victor foes the spoil  
Of lakes and streams and shaded soil.  
Here, Ontwa, have Kaskaskia's sires  
For ages raised their council fires—  
And shall we yield these lands unfought,  
So long preserved, so dearly bought ?  
No—Erie's smokes shall still arise,  
And curl amid her native skies :

\* The Indian god of war.

And when they sink—with the last flame  
Let perish Erie's race and name.

One duty, Ontwa, yet remains :  
This weapon, red with bloody stains,\*  
Must Erie's bold defiance speak  
To Saranac : him must thou seek.  
Should Saranac the pledge receive,  
And still thy life and freedom leave,  
Like mountain deer, thy footsteps turn  
To heights where Erie's fires shall burn.  
Fix in thy crest this heron plume,  
Which none but warriors e'er assume,  
Or messengers, like thee, who go  
With bold defiance to the foe.

Thy quiver is already hung—  
Quick let thy slacken'd bow be strung.  
The foe—so said my three-fold dream—  
Debarks beside Niag'ra's stream :  
Nor gloomy night, nor sultry day,  
Nor streams, nor wood, must cause delay ;

\* Carver says that the Indians, when they declare war, send a blood-stained weapon as a signal. The messenger is generally a slave, who is often killed in the errand.

The shrub must yield thy scanty food,  
Thy hasty sleep must be in wood,  
Thy pace must leave the deer behind  
And follow up the fleetest wind—  
Lest thou shouldst fail the feast to share,  
Our gath'ring bands will soon prepare,  
To fit the soul for battle deed  
And teach the warrior how to bleed.”

Kaskaskia ceased—when, like the dart,  
Was Ontwa's plumage seen to part.  
The craggy hill-top soon was clear'd,  
The plain was past, the forest near'd ;  
While feelings new to youthful breast  
Waked in my heart a warlike zest,  
And tossing high my plumed head  
More proud became my bounding tread :  
When oft the nervous bow was bent  
And feath'ry arrow forward sent,  
To try my fleet and rival pace  
In contest with its winged race.



## ONTWA.

### PART III.

· The sultry day—for 'twas the moon\*  
When day ascends to highest noon—  
Went slowly down,—the shadows deep  
First o'er the sunken valleys sweep,  
Then gradual climb the peaked hill  
Where yellow twilight lingers still :—  
But Ontwa's step no falt'ring knew,  
And still press'd on as day withdrew.

The night was now at top of heaven,  
The stars had half their lustre given ;  
And oft the night bird, as her eye  
Was musing on the silent sky,

\* June.—The Indians reckon months by moons, generally designating them by some appropriate appellation, such as the hunting moou, the sultry moon, &c.



Scared at the noise of hasty rush  
That dash'd aside the stubborn bush—  
Unlike the wolf in wily round,  
Or wildcat's far but noiseless bound—  
Had risen aloft and with her screams  
Disturb'd the stilly hour of dreams.  
At last, among the shadows near,  
The glide of water caught my ear.  
Oh, what a charm to lips that thirst,  
Has rippling water's sudden burst!  
Long had my wearied pathway led,  
Through wilds that then exhausted spread,  
Where streamlets, dying at their source,  
To mossy rocks had left their course,  
And dews which on the foliage hung  
Alone had cool'd my fever'd tongue.

There, 'neath the trees whose hanging shade  
More dark the murm'ring current made,  
And, as the breeze pass'd o'er, would seem  
To kiss, with loving bough, the stream,  
Prone on my breast I lay, and gave  
My thirsting fever to the wave.  
While thus reposing on the ground,  
List'ning to every passing sound,

With eyes intent upon the wood  
Where soon my march must be renew'd,  
A stately deer, from adverse side,  
Rush'd down to quaff the cooling tide,  
"Drink on," I said, "nor fear my bow  
Will lay thy branching antlers low.  
Like thee was Ontwa glad to dip  
In cooling wave his parched lip."

While thus I musing said, methought  
His watchful eye some object caught ;  
And soon, around a point which bent  
The river from its straight descent,  
Appear'd a red and flickering flame  
Which downward with the current came—  
As if some spirit of the stream  
Had lighted up a friendly beam  
To guide the waters on their way  
While 'neath the hills should sleep the day—  
With one foot raised, as if for flight,  
And head erected tow'ards the light,  
He stood ; fix'd by the dazzling charm,  
All thoughtless of the ambush'd harm,

Till twanging bow an arrow speeding  
Laid him upon the pebbles bleeding.\*  
From light canoe, the torch that bore,  
A hunter leap'd upon the shore,  
Half pleased half sorrowful survey'd  
The victim that his dart had made :  
And as he glided off again  
Thus raised the wild and simple strain.

Ah, hapless deer !  
Thy fleet career  
Will ne'er again  
Skim o'er the plain,  
Nor up the breezy mountain ;  
And at the dawn,  
Thy doe and fawn  
Will vainly seek  
Thee on the creek,  
And near the gurgling fountain.

\* During the summer months, the Indians hunt the deer on the rivers : The insects drive them into the water, and the hunter, floating down under the cover of night, with a torch in the bow of his canoe, comes upon the animal while he is gazing bewildered at the light, and gives the fatal wound ere he is aware of any danger.

'Twas Chanta's eye  
That bade thee die,  
For her I rove  
A slave to love,  
Condemn'd to float the river,  
Till branching horn  
My bark adorn,  
Or blood of doe  
Rest on my bow,  
And spot my stainless quiver.

(Think not the heart in desert bred  
To passion's softer touch is dead,  
Or that this shadowy skin contains  
No bright and animated veins—  
Where, though no blush its course betrays,  
The blood in all its wildness plays.)  
Mid drooping trees and dusky night  
Soon disappear'd the bark and light,  
And paddle's dip and hunter's lay  
At last in murmurs died away.

As rising from my bed of moss,  
The stream, now still again, to cross,  
My thoughts pursued the hunter boy  
So full of triumph, love, and joy.

“ Cast in the stream thy brindled prize,  
Nor seek a smile in Chanta's eyes,—  
No more shall chase of deer or love  
The keenness of thy arrow prove :  
The sounds of war already fill  
The wigwams of thy native hill,  
And Chanta's voice, that bade thee stain  
Thy spotless dart in deer-blood slain,  
Must bid thee take a nobler bow  
And meet in bloodier field the foe.”

The stream was pass'd—and fresh from rest,  
Again through length'ning wilds I prest,  
Dripping with damps of stream and dew,  
Till peep of morn broke on the view.  
I stay'd a moment on the height  
Where blue Ontario meets the sight,  
And when the star of day arose  
Refresh'd and bright from long repose,  
Methought the broad and polish'd wave  
Some brief and distant glimpses gave  
Of barks, or shadows moving there,—  
But soon 'twas lost amid the glare.  
Onward I pass'd, now plunging down  
The shelving steep from summit's crown ;

Now breaking through the deep ravine,  
 Where light of day is dimly seen,  
 And tangled trees and rocky path  
 Show signs of winter's loosen'd wrath ;  
 Now scaling high the steep again,  
 And ranging o'er the lofty plain,  
 Where oft the bold projecting brow  
 Gave fleeting glimpse of Lake below.

Thus grew and died the toilsome day,  
 And night had darken'd o'er the way,  
 When, rising on my full career,  
 Niag'ra's waters struck the ear.  
 Soon on those Heights my feet were stay'd,  
 Where first its mighty plunge was made—\*  
 (So spoke Kaskaskia's tale of times  
 When Erie's race first won these climes,)  
 By yawning gulf now sever'd wide,  
 Where darkly rolls its present tide,  
 In broken whirlpools sweeping by,  
 Still fainter murm'ring as they fly,  
 Till on the distant plain they cease  
 And seek the Lake in limpid peace.

\* It is a generally received hypothesis, that the Falls of Niagara began their retrogression at the Heights of Queenston.

From scenes below, now wrapp'd in night,  
Slight gleams broke quiv'ring on my sight,  
And myriad sounds, like distant hum,  
By fits upon the ear would come ;  
While gazing still, soft slumbers stole  
On wearied limbs and anxious soul.

The dreaming world before me spread,  
And onward still I seem'd to tread :  
Till arrows, sped with every breath,  
Had closed my path with wounds and death ;  
When lo ! a form, of brighter hue  
Than Indian vision ever knew,  
Threw round a shield of snowy charm  
And turn'd aside the threat'ning harm.  
I knelt to worship ; but methought  
Her face the beams of morning caught,  
And, gath'ring still increasing rays,  
Soon shone in all the sun's broad blaze !  
I woke,—and saw the risen sun  
Already high his course had run :  
Springing elastic from the ground,  
I gazed in doubt and wonder 'round !  
And still with partly dreaming eyes  
Look'd on the plain, the stream and skies.

But soon was fix'd my wand'ring glance  
On far Ontario's broad expanse—  
Like polish'd wall, half raised on high,  
Leaning against the hollow sky.  
There burst Kaskaakia's dream to view,  
The dream inspired by Manitou !  
On Michi-saki's point arose  
The smokes of Erie's thousand foes ;  
Then were the barks, still plying o'er,  
Confusedly crowding on the shore,  
Till all the strand, like swarming hive,  
With hum and tumult seem'd alive.  
High o'er the rest, a lofty smoke  
The fire of Saranac bespoke ;  
Where fancy pictured forth his form,  
Like Areouski mid the storm,  
Gath'ring his bolts, to wreak his ire  
On Erie's race and Ontwa's sire.

How fired my spirit at the sight !  
And plunging down the lofty Height,  
Soon from its base, my winged speed  
Was sweeping through the wood and mead.  
The wily scout was often seen,  
Winding his way through thickets green,



To make that lofty Height his stand ;  
Whence he might spy approaching band.  
Soon grew the nearer tumult loud,  
Of jarring sounds and bustling crowd,  
And every noise that met the ear  
Gave signal that the camp was near.  
I hasten'd on, through deeper shade  
By interwoven tree-tops made,  
Where grass, uncheck'd by with'ring heat,  
Grew green and rank about the feet ;  
And alders, on the border side,  
Like verdant fringe, hung o'er the tide,  
Leaving the upward glancing ray  
Amid their leaves a broken play—  
Which, as it downward gleam'd, in vain  
Had strived an ent'ring pass to gain.  
Half ling'ring to enjoy the scene,  
The grateful shade and flow'ry green,  
And half to dress my heron crest  
Which hasty march had slight depress'd—  
I loiter'd through the fair retreat,  
As if some charm detain'd my feet ;  
When lo ! on bed of roses there,  
A form, like bright *Hahunah*\* fair,

\* The Indian word for morning.

In slumber broke upon my sight !  
Was it my dreaming vision bright ?  
Or, spirit sent from liquid cave  
Beneath Ontario's shining wave,  
To guide the favour'd Saranac  
O'er the far billows of his track ?

Her raven hair, half wreath'd, descended,  
And o'er her face like shadows blended ;  
Half veiling charms of fairer hue  
Than ever forest daughter knew.  
Such locks ne'er deck'd the desert child !  
Ne'er bloom'd such cheeks in forest wild !  
Not that the skin of doe or fawn  
That o'er her fairer neck is drawn,  
And all the rising breast conceals,  
Which Erie's daughter half reveals.  
Trembling, as in my dream I knelt,  
And all the awe of worship felt :—  
“ Bright spirit of the air or deep !  
Let Ontwa guard thy morning sleep.  
This wild rose, blooming o'er thy rest,  
I'll pluck to decorate thy breast ;  
That kind propitious sweets may bear  
My name to visions rising there.”

I gazed, enchain'd by powerful spell,  
Till bow and dart forgotten fell,  
And Erie and invading host  
Were all in one deep feeling lost.  
I watch'd the closing of her dreams  
To catch her eye's first opening beams.  
The long dark lashes slowly rose,  
As all unwilling to disclose  
The light beneath : so fringed height  
Oft gives delay to morning's light.  
They broke,—but oh ! 'twere vain,—how faint  
Were tints the gleam of star to paint !  
What wonder, that my forest eye  
Should deem her spirit of the sky ?  
Or, doubt that the red Indian's earth  
Could give such shining beauties birth ?  
My youthful ear had heard of race,  
With form enrobed and snowy face,  
Which, coming from the rising sun,  
O'er all the morning world had run ;  
But Ontwa never knew their blood  
Had beat in hearts that roved the wood,  
Nor that their fairer hues had shed  
Their lustre o'er our shadowy red.

I said like dawn her slumbers pass'd,  
But soon that dawn was overcast ;  
The smile, her happy dreams had left,  
By terror was at once bereft—  
At sight of bold intruder there,  
Of stranger mien and frenzied air.  
Like frighted doe, with sudden start,  
She seized her ready bow and dart,  
And drawing home the feathery guard,  
Half turn'd, as if for flight prepared :  
'The plumed death a moment stay'd,  
A moment was the flight delay'd,  
When, kneeling still—" Ah ! stay," I cried,  
" Blest spirit of the air or tide,  
Nor thus in angry terror shun  
Ontwa, the Chief of Erie's son :  
Bearing proud message from my race  
To Saranac, my erring pace  
Intruded on thy slumbers sweet ;  
I knelt in homage at thy feet,  
And pluck'd a wild rose o'er thy head  
And on thy breast its odours spread,  
Propitious visions to inspire  
For Ontwa's race and Ontwa's sire."

Her eye no longer bore a frown,  
Her bow, relax'd, was sinking down,  
And in relenting pause she stood—  
When arrow, sent from neighb'ring wood,  
Half erring, sped its ambush'd harm  
And quiver'd in my bleeding arm.  
She sprang, she knelt, and as she drew  
The reeking barb and feather through,  
Her shining hair swept o'er my breast—  
Her hand upon my shoulder prest—  
Her cheek came near : What then was pain,  
My wilder'd feelings to restrain ?—  
Ontwa had torment learnt to bear,  
But ne'er had look'd on cheek so fair :  
What wonder then, the tempting bliss  
My lips should seize with daring kiss ?

To draw the dart with pitying speed,  
And rise again at daring deed,  
And turn with proud reproachful look—  
Of time but briefest moment took ;  
That moment past, the bowman came  
To follow up his arrow's aim—  
A Chief of lofty gait and mien  
With hasty steps approach'd the scene.

“What foot has dared in slumb’ring hour  
To steal within Oneyda’s bower?  
Let second arrow truer fly—  
Thy stranger plume speaks lurking spy.”  
The bow was fiercely bent again—  
And barb drawn back with nervous strain—  
When sudden slacks the vengeful draught,  
Lest loved Oneyda feel the shaft;  
For then, just ere the arrow flew,  
In generous haste, her form she threw,  
To beg her father’s warrior bow,  
Would spare the blood of kneeling foe.  
But Ontwa was not kneeling then,—  
Though all too late my bow had been  
To check the Chief’s impetuous dart,  
Whose truer flight had reach’d my heart  
Had not the form, my vision gave,  
Been hov’ring near my life to save.

\* \* \*

Beneath an elm, whose spreading top  
Around like curtains seem’d to drop,  
Sate Saranac—while, on the ground  
His myriad followers closed around:  
First aged chiefs, then warriors bold,  
Then youths allow’d their place to hold;

While women, children, farther still,  
All join the circling group to fill—  
Where shaven head, and feather'd crest,  
And bow and club for battle dress'd,  
Of every form and hue appear,  
Like leaves that deck the dying year.  
Within this ring was Ontwa led  
Already doom'd to join the dead;  
Condemn'd, by ling'ring pangs to die,  
As sentence due to lurking spy.  
Stern Saranac, in haughty gloom,  
Sate while a chief proclaim'd my doom;  
The fair Oneyda leaning near,  
As if to ask a pitying ear,  
Bending her beauties o'er his form,  
Like sunshine on the brow of storm.

Ere yet the guards had seized their prey,  
While mercy seem'd to ask delay,  
I raised my blood-stain'd pledge on high  
And cried—"No spy, stern chief, am I.  
From great Kaskaskia, Ontwa's sire,  
I bring this pledge of Erie's ire."

"Kaskaskia's son! take back thy life—  
To lose it in a nobler strife.

We come from other climes afar,  
New lands to seek for chase and war :  
Once on a Lake, whose lesser sweep  
Lies fix'd in mountain basin deep ;\*  
Where green and lofty peaks arise  
Till blended with the deep blue skies,  
Long shutting out the morning ray  
From waters that beneath them lay ;  
Raised Saranac his hundred fires  
Amid the ashes of his sires.  
But mightier race than ours has come  
And driven us from our ancient home,  
Where forest's bow—of game despoil'd  
That seeks afar securer wild—  
And hill and plain, no more possess  
The charm and sport of wilderness.  
Not weak we come ; thou dost behold  
But half our chiefs and warriors bold.  
No breeze now stirs on yon blue Lake,  
That does not moving barks o'ertake,  
All plying fast the sail, or oar,  
To gain this designated shore :  
When all are come—prepared for fight,  
We hold our course up yonder Height,

\* Lake Champlain.



Where, should the Eries sue for peace,  
Our hostile march perchance may cease.—  
A warrior shall attend thee out  
To guard thee safe beyond our scout.”

“ No guard does Ontwa want, nor guide ;  
With bow and quiver by my side,  
And step all used to forest maze,  
My march shall mock thy scout's keen gaze :  
Ere yon bright sun again shall rise  
And light anew the eastern skies,  
Drinking the dew-drop on the flower  
Shed there by evening's viewless shower,  
Ontwa the feast and dance will share,  
Which Erie's warriors now prepare ;  
Whose games such deadly thirst shall wake  
As blood of foe alone can slake.”

Then had my course, with sudden bound,  
Been speeding far from foeman's ground,  
And vainly through the thicket wood  
By step or vision been pursued ;  
When, like a deer whose ready start  
Is check'd by arrow through the heart.  
Half turn'd I stay'd, fix'd by the eye  
Of fair Oneyda hov'ring nigh.—

A glance withheld my daring soul  
And all my winged purpose stole :  
No more the image of my dream,  
Which fancy might a spirit deem,  
I saw her now of mortal birth,  
Though fairest child of Indian earth,  
And felt a new and throbbing heat  
Through every quick pulsation beat.  
'Twas the same throb that shook my breast  
When first I watch'd her dreaming rest ;  
But then methought that throb was given  
To spirit of the wave or heaven.

What though a thousand warriors stood,  
Ready to spill presumptuous blood,  
Whose stranger love should dare disgrace  
The pride and blossom of their race ?  
I turn'd and knelt—and as I gazed,  
Saw not the myriad weapons raised  
To pierce my heart,—the threat'ning harm  
Was check'd but by Oneyda's arm,  
That waved in pity o'er my form  
And stay'd midway the bursting storm.—  
'Twas but a moment's bliss I felt,  
'Twas but a moment that I knelt—

I saw the anguish of her eye,  
The tender fear that bade me fly,  
And wildly seizing, as I pass'd,  
One short embrace—then deem'd the last—  
Ere sire could turn, or throng rush on,  
Ontwa, like lightning's flash, was gone.

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## ONTWA.

### PART IV.

‘MORN, through her arched gates of light,  
Now follow’d up the shadow’s flight,  
And shed from ruddy clouds a glow  
That gilded wood and lake below ;  
When on my sight all dimly broke  
The glimpse of distant tent and smoke.  
The rugged hill uprose in vain,  
And vainly spread the lengthen’d plain,  
To check my fleet and eager way :  
Then, as the sun’s first level ray  
Burst on Kaskaskia’s waking view,  
That ray presented Ontwa too.  
He calmly heard my errand done—  
Unmoved he saw the peril run ;  
For stern composure, full of thought,  
Had to his mien submission taught,

And bliss or woe pass'd o'er his mind,  
Nor light nor shadow left behind :  
Or if his iron forehead e'er  
Betray'd a feeling less severe,  
'Twas like the wintry sun's faint glow  
That leaves more hard the front of snow.

Now gathers round the warlike throng,  
Prepared for feast and dance and song.  
The fire awakes and curls on high,  
And whoops ascend the hollow sky,  
While many a faithful Aleem\* bleeds  
To fit the soul for battle deeds.  
A hundred warriors now advance,  
All dress'd and painted for the dance ;  
And sounding club and hollow skin  
A slow and measured time begin :  
With rigid limb and sliding foot,  
And murmurs low, the time to suit,  
Forever varying with the sound,  
The circling band moves 'round and 'round.  
Now slowly rise the swelling notes,  
When every crest more lively floats,

\* The dog : an animal that is sacrificed and eaten on every solemn occasion.

Now toss'd on high with gesture proud,  
 Then lowly mid the circle bow'd ;  
 While clanging arms grow louder still,  
 And every voice becomes more shrill,  
 Till fierce and strong the clamour grows  
 And the wild war-whoop bids it close.  
 Then starts Shuuktonga forth, whose band  
 Came far from Huron's storm-beat strand,  
 And thus recounts his battle feats,  
 While his dark club the measure beats :\*

“ At fall of leaf, o'er Huron's wave  
 Came party of the Saukies brave,  
 Far from the mighty Turtle's† isle,  
 And, stealing on our tribe with guile,  
 When hunter's arm and bow were gone  
 And wives and children left alone,  
 Seized on the weak and helpless prey,  
 And bore them, weeping slaves, away.

“ Shuuktonga, from the hunt returning,  
 Found all were gone, and wigwams burning,  
 And deep revenge he swore.

\* At the Indian feasts, when a dance is concluded, some warrior starts up and recounts a battle feat, of which the narrator is always the hero.

† Michi-mackinac means great Turtle.

Through thirty suns and thirty sleeps,  
At loneliest glens and highest steeps  
Severest fast he bore.

“ Then on the ground his mat he spread,  
And raised aloft his signal red,  
And call'd on all whose hearts had bled,  
To string the vengeful bow ;  
That Saukies' blood might quench the flame,  
Which long had burnt to tell their shame  
And triumph of the foe.

“ O'er ice and snow we bore the war ;  
The isle's white summit, gleaming far  
Long after day had sunk to rest,  
Was raising high its yellow crest  
To lead us on our way :  
The night was midway riding o'er,  
When reach'd our files its lofty shore :  
Through knotted trees, along the brink,  
Where sliding foot would often shrink,  
And threat'ning rocks and yawning arch\*  
Would oft delay the cautious march,  
Our silent pathway lay.

\* The “ arched rock” on the island of Michi-mackinac, is one of the greatest and most interesting curiosities of the country of the Lakes.

“ Beneath the brink, the Saukies slept.  
No watchful eye the sentry kept,  
E'en Aleem's bark was dumb !  
We hung on high—no spirit seem'd  
To tell them, as they sweetly dream'd,  
The vengeful foe is come !

“ The morning broke ; but Saucies eye  
Ne'er look'd again on dappled sky—  
For every heart that beat at eve,  
Ere dawning light, had ceased to heave ;  
And not a tongue was left to tell,  
How Saukies fought or Saukies fell.”

Shuuktonga ceased :—In murmuring strain,  
The circling dance began again ;  
And when the whoop proclaim'd its close,  
Catawba, midst the clamour, rose.  
From Erie's shore, where islands spread  
Like wampum belt across its head,  
He came,—and thus, in numbers rude,  
Loudly the varying song renew'd.

“ Oft in my youth I used to take  
Advent'rous course across the lake,  
From isle to island plying ;



Nor fear'd, when fierce the tempest shook,  
Far in some cove or rocky nook,  
Where billow never roll'd its way,  
My light canoe would find a bay,  
And all in peace be lying.

“ What led me o'er the distant wave ?  
What led me thus the storm to brave ?  
'Twas Unadilla's love.  
Miami's Chief, her warlike sire,  
Received me at his friendly fire,  
And did my suit approve.

“ I sought her on the rocky cliff,  
Where she was wont to watch my skiff  
Skimming the waters fleet,—  
And where, with ornaments and skin,  
She now prepared the mockasin  
To deck Catawba's feet.

“ I stole along, with silent pace,  
And paused a moment just to trace  
Her features through the shade,  
When, rushing from the other side,  
A youth, array'd in warlike pride,  
His bold appearance made.

shook,  
“ With eager joy and greeting warm  
I saw him fold her yielding form,—  
My jealous brain turn'd 'round.  
Ere yet the quick embrace could part,  
My hasty arrow pierced his heart—  
His plumage kiss'd the ground.

“ She turn'd, and saw the fatal bow  
Whose rashness laid the warrior low.  
And cried, in anguish wild,  
' Ah! fly, Catawba, fly the deed ;  
Not unrevenged can Waitou bleed—  
He was Miami's child !'

“ Already rush'd the impatient crowd  
To greet the youth, with clamours loud.  
Just come from field of fame.  
I dared not seek a parting sigh,  
I turn'd, but not in fear—to fly :  
I fled to hide my shame.

“ My lingering bark, with idle oar,  
Scarce plied along the rocky shore—  
Watching the jutting cliff above,—  
What well known form was seen to move ?

'Twas Unadilla's step advanced :  
Around an anxious eye she glanced ;  
When, from a point, was seen to shoot  
A bark, as if in quick pursuit.  
I heeded not its fast approach—  
I saw her foot too far encroach,  
    As if to urge my flight :  
Methought the crumbling rock gave way—  
Kind Manitou the ruin stay !—  
    I closed my aching sight.

“ The crash and plunge in silence died—  
The rippling wave spread far and wide,  
At last my distant bark it shook ;  
I raised my head with trembling look—  
    And all was calm again.  
All thoughtless of pursuer's course,  
I darted off with frantic force,  
    As if to fly from pain.

“ My single arm an isle had near'd,  
Before the stronger bark appear'd,  
    Driven on with foaming speed :  
'Twas then, with lagging strength, my mind  
First waked to peril yet behind,  
    And roused to sense of heed.

“ I urged my way round rocky cape,  
By sheltering bay to make escape,  
And, ere their bark my skiff could reach,  
Its lighter prow had struck the beach,  
    And I was in the wood.  
In vengeful haste through thicket shade,  
O'er swelling knoll and rocky glade,  
    My steps were close pursued.

“ Fast gain'd they on my failing pace—  
Like hunters urging on the chase,  
    More near became their bound ;  
When on my path, a refuge cave\*  
Yawn'd wide, as if a wretch to save,—  
    I plunged beneath the ground :  
The cloven rocks a passage gave  
    Within the dark profound,  
    Where died away each passing sound.

“ I sunk on moist and rocky bed ;  
To dreaming lands my spirit fled,  
    And left behind its grief,—

\* There is a cave in the island of Put-in-Bay, which has been the subject of much admiration, on account of its dimensions and beautiful stalactites.

Again my Unadilla lived,—  
And smiled again, his son revived—  
The old Miami Chief.

“ But oh! what horrors when I woke!  
No gleam of light around me broke—  
’Twas thickest darkness all;  
And naught disturb’d the silence deep  
’That through the cavern held its sleep,  
Save mournful drops, the roof might weep,  
Scarce sounding in their fall.

“ Catawba was not used to quake,  
But living death like this might shake  
The stoutest heart: I sought some ray  
That might reveal the entering way;  
Through many a chasm and lengthen’d arch  
I groped in wild and desperate search,  
Now stumbling o’er the brittle stones  
Crumbling at touch like mouldering bones,  
Now falling in some silent stream  
Ne’er known to breeze or daylight beam—\*

\* At the end of the cave alluded to, there is a little basin of water, so pellucid and imperturbably clear, as scarcely to appear distinct from the incumbent atmosphere: it is only when a pebble or other thing is thrown into it, that the illusion vanishes.

'Till hopeless, faint and frantic grown,  
 I laid my wearied body down  
     In deep and calm despair.  
 I call'd on death—when oh! methought  
 My bare and fever'd bosom caught  
     Some breath of upper air!  
 I moved—and soon a glimmering ray  
 Led back my steps again to day."

Catawba ceased.—And thus the song  
 And dance and feast the hours prolong.  
 Each Chief his wild adventure told  
 In hunt, in love, or battle bold;  
 And daylight, rolling down the heaven,  
 Had touch'd the forest-brow of even,  
 When rose Kaskaskia from his place,  
 And call'd to arms the Erie race.  
 The revels sunk: Each bow was strung,  
 And quiver o'er each shoulder flung,  
 And every Chief, in warlike mood,  
 Before his warriors ready stood—  
 Their gay crests tossing mid the green,  
 As foam upon the dark waves seen.  
 At first led off the wily scout;  
 When every band took up its route

In single line, with heedful pace,  
Leaving behind no treacherous trace  
On bough or bush or bending grass  
That might reveal the secret pass.—  
'Thus fled the night. No sound betray'd  
That thousands march'd beneath its shade ;  
And mildly shone the moon and stars,  
As earth were sleeping free from wars.  
'The march was stay'd at brightening dawn.  
Far in the forest's depths withdrawn,—  
All, save the scouts, in stillness lay,  
'Till night again conceal'd the way.

\* \* \*

The moon had gone, and darkest hour  
Had lost already half its power,  
And faintest gleam, like scouting spy,  
Was stealing up the morning sky,  
When foremost Chief deep sounds could hear  
That spoke Niag'ra's thunders near.  
At once, a note, that foe would deem  
Naught but the night-bird's piercing scream,  
Was heard afar : at signal sound,  
Each Chief and warrior sunk to ground,  
When every leaf return'd to rest,  
And sprung no more the grass depress'd,

And stillness trembled through the air—  
As never man had trampled there.

'Twas Ontwa now advanced alone :  
To him the foeman's look was known ;  
And, skill'd in signs of forest track—  
The grass bent down—the twigs thrown back,—  
To him was given the task to trace  
The foeman's path and lurking place.—  
With wreath of leaves twined round my brow,  
To look like waving bush or bough,  
I stole along :—as day advanced,  
A keener gaze around was glanced  
That far through thickest foliage sees,  
While my quick ear caught every breeze,  
Till passing sounds were heard no more,  
Lost in Niag'ra's swelling roar.  
Soon, as I stood in covert dark  
An opening in the wood to mark,  
Methought I saw a foeman spy,  
'Mongst skirting trees, pass swiftly by :  
I watch'd his step—full near he came,  
When true was made my arrow's aim :  
He fell :—and, with his signal crest  
And well-known arms and wampum drest,



I launch'd again on bolder route,  
Secure to pass for foeman's scout.

Soon on the wood-crown'd plain and height,  
I caught of foe imperfect sight,  
Deep hid by mask of boughs and leaves  
That all but keenest eye deceives.  
Then unsuspected here and there,  
I hover'd round their secret lair,—  
Noted each glade, recess, and path  
That might conduct the battle's wrath,  
And give direction or disguise  
To bold attack or dark surprise :  
Then doffing arms and crest of slain,  
Triumphant darted back again.  
' Poor scout,' I said—' my dart laid low—  
Long thy return may wait the foe,  
And while they chide thy lagging pace,  
Vengeance may reach their lurking place—  
And Erie come, by Ontwa led,  
Through paths thy fallen crest betray'd.'

Now woke Kaskaskia's signal sound—  
At once the warriors rise around :  
He bade them wreath their brows with green  
That they might ape the verdant scene.

“ No sound will wake the foeman’s ear,  
Fill’d with Niag’ra’s thunders near ;  
And still inactive they may lie  
Waiting their slow returning spy,  
Who, low by Ontwa’s arrow laid,  
Now sleeps at rest in yonder glade.  
Their coverts reach’d, let bush or tree  
The ambush of each Erie be,  
Till wily whoop shall cause the foe,  
Thoughtless of harm, his crests to show.  
Then, when from lurking place they rise  
And stand unmask’d before our eyes,  
Let then the feather’d vengeance wake,  
And every dart its victim take ;  
And lest some barb should vainly speed,  
Let the dark club pursue the deed—  
Till every spot where foeman stood  
Shall bear a corpse, and float in blood.  
Know, the triumphant hour is nigh ;  
For the Great Spirit of the sky,  
As he rush’d by amid the storm,  
Did thus Kaskaskia’s soul inform :  
*Never shall Erie lose the field,  
While foe shall desert weapon wield.”*

\* \* \*

The star of day was just descending,  
Its lustre still to vapours lending  
That high above Niag'ra hung,  
And down reflected brightness flung  
On dark abyss and forest shade,  
And twilight in its march delay'd ;  
When, all unseen, the Erie bands  
Had seized their close and ambush'd stands,  
And lowly crouch'd with listening ear,  
Waiting the signal whoop to hear.—  
The pause was deep,—and, save the roar  
Of rumbling waters tumbling o'er  
The torrent's steep, no sound was heard  
That aught the calm of twilight stirr'd.

At last the whoop deceptive rose—  
At once leap'd up a thousand foes  
From tree and bush and lowly shrub,  
With bended bow, and lifted club,  
Casting around an anxious eye,  
As asking—whence the battle-cry ?  
From viewless bows, a plumed shower  
Burst forth from covert shade and bower,  
As if each leaf, by sudden art,  
Had been transform'd to barbed dart,

And fierce and fatal answer sped,  
That laid full many a foeman dead.  
As peal succeeds the lightning's flash,  
So sudden burst the battle's crash :  
With direst whoop, from ambush'd place.  
On rush'd the vengeful Erie race ;  
And, ere the dart had spent its force.  
Pursued with club its bloody course—  
Renewing oft the mortal blow  
On rising and on sinking foe ;  
Till every crest was seen to stoop,  
That rose to view at wily whoop.

Then died the tumult of the fight.  
The moon look'd down with broken light,  
And fitful shone on victor crest,  
And, vanquish'd, sunk in dreamless rest ;  
While rose anew Niag'ra's jar,  
As if to fill the pause of war.  
Lies every foeman bleeding there ?—  
Or whence the whoops that rend the air ?  
'Tis Saranac, with mightier host,  
Who comes—unfelt the thousands lost—  
To wake again the battle's rage.  
On, on we rush—again engage!

This was no wavering, yielding fray,  
That wounds and blood might soon allay;  
'Twas conflict fierce—now deadly grown—  
Whose fury death could end alone.—  
While the full quiver gave its store,  
The arrowy storm was seen to pour :  
Then closed the fight with deeper yell,  
And ponderous clubs together fell,  
And, while the crash to crash succeeds,  
More deep the reeking battle bleed.  
At last the desperate struggle came  
Of vigorous frame lock'd in with frame—  
When closed the fierce and frantic grasp,  
That only broke with life's last gasp.  
The moon oft shining thro' the gloom,  
Would glimpses give of sinking plume,  
Of writhing form, and drooping head,  
And thousands cold on gory bed.  
The clouds pass'd off the face of heaven,  
And back the fainting foe was driven !  
A moment stay'd Kaskaskia's foot,  
Lest ambush wait the quick pursuit,—  
When, bursting from a viewless cloud,  
Quick peals of thunder, sharp and loud,  
From height behind the foemen broke,  
And darting far its fatal stroke—

Like Arcouski's shrouded wrath,  
Spread death and terror o'er its path.  
The trembling Eries shrunk aghast!  
'Twas the Great Spirit sent the blast,  
And bade them yield to foes the field  
Who thus could Heaven's own thunders wield.\*  
They sunk to earth, with fears subdued :  
Alone erect, Kaskaskia stood.  
The moon beam'd full upon his brow,  
Of more than mortal sternness now,  
While, kindling 'neath her gentle beam,  
His eye sent back its fiercest gleam,—  
As it would quench the light which shone  
On Erie's greatness overthrown,—  
Or ask the cloudless skies, whence came  
This thunder, wrapp'd in smoke and flame ?  
Again along the wood it peals !—  
Kaskaskia's lofty plumage reels !  
Through unseen wound, in gushing flood,  
His ample breast sends forth its blood ;—  
Long the red earth the torrent drinks,  
Ere yet that lofty plumage sinks :

\* The inexperienced savages, when they first heard the report of fire-arms, supposed those who used them to be more than mortals, and made no resistance to what they believed to be the wrath of the Great Spirit.

At last it falls,—like hanging rock,  
That slowly yields to lightning's shock,  
Till prop and hold and all are gone,  
Then sinks, in majesty, alone.

The battle swept along,—it pass'd ;  
And wearied carnage sunk at last :  
While, rising o'er the reeking plain,  
Niag'ra swell'd his din again,  
Hush'd the last groans the dying gave,  
And rung o'er Erie's bloody grave.—  
The morning came, and curving rays  
Bedeck'd anew the torrent's haze :  
But Erie's eye was quench'd in night.  
Save Ontwa's—none saw morning light,—  
A lonely captive—spared to grace  
The feast, of triumph, o'er his race.

## ONTWA.

### PART V.

'THE day pass'd o'er the scene of blood,  
And night again hung o'er the wood ;  
But other scenes than strife and war  
Now caught the light of moon and star.  
As sunk the sun, the victors rose,  
Refresh'd by rest since battle's close,  
And roused the feast of sacrifice :—  
For with the morning Ontwa dies.  
Beneath an oak, on rising ground,  
Fast to the trunk, by osiers bound,  
The victim sat : while fierce and loud,  
Spread far and near the circling crowd.  
A central fire curl'd high in air,  
And, darting 'round a ruddy glare,  
Bright on the inner circle glow'd,  
The distant throng more dimly show'd,  
And tinged the pile with gloomy light  
Which stood before the captive's sight—



Waiting but morn's enkindling breath,  
'To light down Ontwa's soul to death.

Sped on the feast and revelry :  
'The dance oft wheel'd around the tree,  
The flaming brand was often sent,  
And bow in idle mockery bent :  
But naught the soul of Ontwa shook—  
He answer'd all with scornful look ;  
And thus, amid the insulting throng,  
Raised high and bold his victim-song :

'Think not Ontwa's spirit shaken ;  
Fear can ne'er a throb awaken—  
Though this form be captive taken,  
    Still his soul is free.  
All your fiery torments scorning,  
Pleased he sees the pile adorning,  
Which shall send him, with the morning,  
    Sire and friends to see.

What though Erie low be lying—  
And no voice will e'er be crying  
For revenge of Ontwa dying!  
    Still his soul will boast :

Where yon vultures now are feeding,  
Many a foeman's corse lies bleeding,  
Given by Ontwa's dart their speeding :  
    These revenge his ghost.

Stars of heaven ! why still ascending ?  
Would your lights were downward bending,  
Would the shades of night were ending,  
    And the day begun.  
By delightful rivers staying,  
Erie's gather'd bands are straying,  
Chiding Ontwa's long delaying—  
    Would the night were done.

Thus, while around the revels rung,  
My song of death was proudly sung.—  
A fiery juice, by white men given,  
Oft through the feast and dance was driven,  
And loud and fierce the tumult grew :  
No rest the forest echoes knew  
From whoop and yell, till midnight hour  
Descended with its drowsy power,  
And falling on the crowd around  
Laid them in slumbers on the ground.  
All, save the guard of Ontwa, slept :  
E'en that but fitful watching kept ;

And with continued languor prest,  
Sunk down, at last, among the rest.

The downward moon now gently shone  
On Ontwa's waking eye alone.  
The fire, unfed, descended low,  
And shed but weak and flickering glow,  
While scarce the dying coals awoke,  
Beneath the dew-drop from the oak—  
Caught by some leaf in silence there  
And sent down glittering through the air.  
'Twas stillness all, save broken scream  
That sometimes burst from warrior's dream,  
As if anew the battle raged,  
And all his dreaming thoughts engaged.

Viewing the scene with vacant eye,  
Now fix'd on earth, now on the sky,  
With rising soul, whose flight was borne  
Far o'er the fate of coming morn,  
And mix'd already with the bands  
Of Erie, risen in happier lands,—  
In dreaming thoughtfulness I sunk,  
Half slumb'ring 'gainst the tree's dark trunk:  
Till fancy, mid the light and shade  
That underneath the foliage play'd,

Pictured a form, like vision bright,  
Now hovering near, now far from sight ;  
As if some spirit, sent to bear  
My soul away, were waiting there.  
Nearer and nearer yet it drew :  
Did fancy still deceive my view ?  
'The moon sent forth a brighter beam,  
That broke the shadows of my dream ;—  
'Tis she ! that beam her form betrays—  
'Twas fair Oneyda met my gaze !

The ever watchful dog, that heard  
Her near approach, a moment stirr'd,  
A moment view'd her, as she stood  
Like spirit lost amid the wood—  
Then crouch'd again with chiding whine,  
As if awaked by moon-beam's shine.  
With wary look, and listening ear  
That paused each trembling sound to hear.  
And foot whose fall would scarce disturb  
The dew that stood on leaf and herb,  
Through the prone guard around that lay—  
She made her light and cautious way.  
Why starts that warrior from his doze ?  
'Twas but a restless dream of foes

That roused him from his earthy bed,  
Where soon again he bows his head ;  
And as the murm'ring sounds subside,  
Oneyda stands at Ontwa's side.  
Delight and wonder chain'd my tongue,  
While o'er my captive form she hung ;  
And thus, as with a trembling hand  
She loosed the osier's knotty band,  
And then, with bright entreating eye  
And earnest gesture, bade me fly.  
Silent and lost in gaze of love,  
I felt nor wish nor power to move :  
She seized my hand, and led the way,  
Where prostrate guard and warriors lay,  
With scatter'd darts and slacken'd bow—  
That told, the Erie race was low.

She paused when deep within the shade :—  
“ Now fly, young warrior ! fly—” she said ;  
“ Urge through the dark thy rapid flight,  
Nor fear pursuit till morning light :  
My hand the drowsy drink prepared,  
Which lull'd to rest thy watchful guard ;  
Now low among the crowd o'erthrown,  
They'll find too late the victim flown.

Last of a race—now lost in war!  
Seek out some new and brighter star :  
And when thou sleep'st beneath its beam,  
Let far Oneyda share thy dream."

Can Ontwa paint her simple grace—  
Her slender form, and lovely face,  
Which only half its beauty show'd,  
So wildly loose her dark locks flow'd—  
The tear that dimm'd her glist'ning eye,  
When she would bid the wanderer fly?—  
The sinking moon with pleased delay  
Glanced on her charms a mellow ray,  
And show'd on robe and features fair  
The dew, and brighter tear-drop, there.—  
Did Ontwa then alone depart ?  
Ah! no. I cried, with selfish heart,  
" Sweet blossom of the wild! thy hands  
Have sever'd Ontwa's captive bands,  
But vainly dost thou set him free,  
When still his heart is bound to thee.  
The osier bond no longer holds,  
But wreath of love has stronger folds :  
Oh, thou bright vision of my sleep,  
Ere Ontwa's eyes had learnt to weep—

Thou, whom I thought a star from heaven,  
Or spirit by the blue wave given,  
When watching o'er thy morning rest  
I placed the wild rose on thy breast—  
Oh whither, now, shall Ontwa turn ?  
His country's fires no longer burn :  
Of home and sire and kindred left,  
What has the lonely wanderer left—  
If thou, Oneyda, scorn his love,  
And send him forth alone to rove ?  
My death-song had been proudly sung,  
My soul like nervous bow was strung,  
And waited with impatient smile  
The burning of the fatal pile,  
Whose morn-enkindling flames would close  
Over the last of Erie's woes.  
What drew my spirit back to earth ?—  
'Twas form of more than Indian birth,  
Such charms as Ontwa never knew,  
For never such in desert grew.  
Erie's red daughters long had sigh'd  
To melt this bosom's icy pride,  
But till I saw Oneyda's face  
I never loved, but sportive chase.  
Then wilt thou forth the wanderer send,  
Bereft of home and sire and friend ?

When thou, Oneyda—wouldst thou roam,  
Might be his friend, his sire and home.”

“ Too well, bold youth ! thou know’st the art  
To win with flattering tongue the heart,  
And far too willing thou hast found  
My ear to listen to the sound.  
Prize not too high this fairer face,  
Which owes its hues to white man’s race :  
Learn that Oneyda’s mother came  
From distant shores of Gallic name,—  
In former wars, her home subdued,  
By savage foe and death pursued,  
To Saranac she owed her life ;  
And, in return, became his wife.  
Ere twice the forest bloom had fled,  
She sunk within her narrow bed—  
Whence her lorn soul return’d again  
To hover o’er her native plain.  
'Twas from *her* milk Oneyda drew  
The snows that gave this brighter hue.  
'Twas all of Gallia’s race she gave :  
The rest was buried in her grave.—  
But why detain ?—Oh ! quickly haste,  
Nor more the precious moments waste.



Nay—why delay ?—'Tis all in vain :  
 'Twere easy this weak heart to gain—  
 But soon, by Saranac's command,  
 Will Weywin claim Oneyda's hand ;  
 A warlike chief—by sire approved,  
 Though never by Oneyda loved :  
 Yet hadst not *thou*—but hark ! methought  
 My ear the sound of tumult caught !  
 It is ! they find the captive flown !  
 Oh, fly ;—yet stay—ah, yes, begone  
 For should Oneyda share thy way,  
 'Twould but thy fleeter step delay."

The tumult rose.—“ On, on,” she cried,  
 “ And may my mother's spirit guide.”—  
 We darted forward through the glade,  
 And soon were lost in distant shade—  
 Where not a sound came on the wind,  
 To say pursuit was still behind.

\* \* \*

“ Here, my Oneyda, rest thy feet,  
 No eye will find this far retreat :  
 Here on this bank shalt thou repose,  
 Shelter'd from sun, secure from foes,  
 While o'er thy deep and weary sleep.  
 Ontwa shall watchful sentry keep.”—

On flowery bank fatigued she sank,  
Where hunted deer full often drank—  
Perhaps, like us, no longer fearing  
The lost pursuer's reappearing.  
“ With thee, young warrior ! thee so near,  
What has Oneyda's heart to fear ?  
My infant ears could scarce rejoice  
When wont to hear a mother's voice ;  
For scarce they caught her note of love.  
Ere her pure soul was borne above :  
But still, methinks, I never hung  
On sweetness of a mother's tongue,  
With half the rapture I incline  
To catch the gentle sounds of thine.  
Oh, when I lived among the crowd,  
Where hundred warriors 'round me bow'd,  
Now giving fruit of hunting toil,  
And now the nobler battle-spoil ;  
When every morn my cabin door  
Was hung with flowers and verdure o'er,  
And bloom of spring and summer's sweet  
Were offer'd at Oneyda's feet ;  
My bosom never knew a bliss—  
It scarce e'er dreamt of joy—like this.  
Here by this still and lonely stream  
My soul shall wake its sweetest dream,

And when we rise to fly again  
For refuge in some distant plain,  
Oh, may Oneyda's vigour prove  
Firm and unwearied as her love."

On bed of flowers, by Ontwa made,  
Her drooping charms she gently laid ;  
And oft her slumbers check'd to raise  
A glance that ever met my gaze ;  
Till visions quench'd their quivering light,  
As clouds steal o'er the stars of night.  
Oh ! what a charm to lover's eye  
Have beauties that in slumber lie !  
When, all confiding, they are given  
To faith, that's watch'd alone by Heaven.  
In trusting innocence she slept,  
While love the sacred vigil kept.

The trembling lip and heaving breast  
Oft spoke the fears that broke her rest ;  
And oft she'd cry, in dreaming fright,  
" Fly, Ontwa ! why delay our flight ?  
Methinks 'tis Weywin's dart I see—  
Its vengeful barb is aim'd at thee."—  
" Sweet sleeper ! calm thy vision's fear ;  
Is not thy watchful warrior near ?

The forest sleeps beneath the sun,  
The lonely waters calmly run,  
And scarce the insect flutters 'round,  
Lest it should wake thee with its sound.  
Soon as thy broken slumbers end,  
Again our course afar we'll bend,  
Launch our light bark, and refuge take  
In friendlier regions o'er the lake.  
There, where Ohio's waters press  
Their silent way through wilderness,  
And echo, as they wind along,  
Only the bird's or hunter's song,  
On some lone border of the wild,  
I'll shelter thee, thou snowy child!"

The evening sun, descending low,  
His level beams began to throw  
Beneath the trees, which stretch'd their shades  
Like giant limbs through lengthen'd glades,—  
When, starting from her flowery bed,  
Oneyda wildly raised her head,  
And, still half dreaming, bent her ear  
As if she thought pursuers near.  
" Ah! no—'twas all a dream. But oh!  
Methought I saw fierce Weywin's bow

Aiming at thee its vengeful dart :  
It sped,—but struck Oneyda's heart.  
The pang was dreadful, but methought  
I would again the dart have caught,  
Again severer pangs have braved,  
Were life of Ontwa to be saved.—  
But hark ! I hear a step advance !—  
'Tis he !—'Tis Weywin's fiery glance—  
And bended bow"—And to my breast,  
With fatal haste, she frantic prest,—  
Her warning dream, alas ! too true,—  
Just as the vengeful arrow flew !  
Her warm blood o'er my bosom gush'd,  
As from her wound the torrent rush'd,  
While yet her eye, with ray intense,  
Beam'd forth its dying eloquence ;  
And ere the smile had left her cheek,  
Which still of parting love would speak,  
Her soul of snowy hue had flown,—  
And left me in this world alone.

The day went down on Ontwa's grief.  
He saw nor foeman's tribe nor chief  
Drawn by the signal whoop around,  
As Weywin gave the fatal wound.—

The victor chief tore off his plume :  
His wailing tribe sat down in gloom :  
But chief nor tribe could ever know  
The depth of Ontwa's silent wo.—  
Three days, the murmuring stream pursued  
Its course along the mournful wood,  
Echoing the notes of plaintive song,  
That told the sorrows of the throng—  
When 'neath a willow's drooping shade,  
Within her narrow house, was laid  
The loved Oneyda.       \*

\*           \*           \*  
What now had Ontwa left on earth ?—  
Lonely he rose, and wander'd forth.  
His wand'rings—but, of what avail,  
To lengthen out my mournful tale ?—  
Led by the love of one dear name,  
I sought the land of white men's fame,  
And linger'd years about their fires  
Where slept, methought, her mother's sires.  
The stranger world before me rose ;  
But gave no rest to Ontwa's woes.  
I sought the desert wild again ;  
But the rude scenes revived my pain.

And here my worn and wearied feet  
Have come to seek their last retreat :  
And here I stand—my wither'd grief,  
Hanging like dry and quivering leaf,  
That waits from heaven but faintest breath,  
To break its hold, and sink in death.'

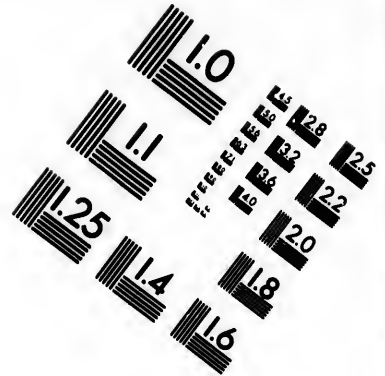
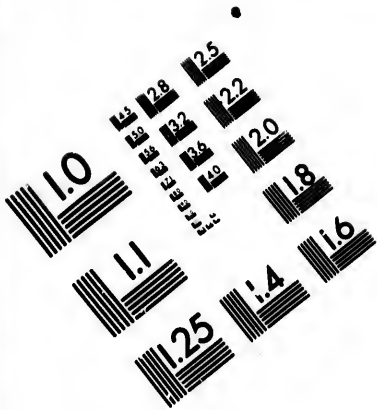
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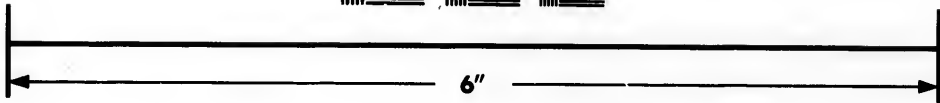
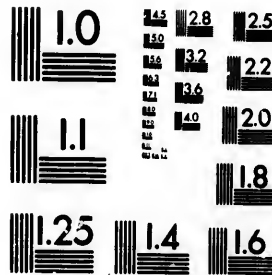
**ILLUSTRATIONS.**







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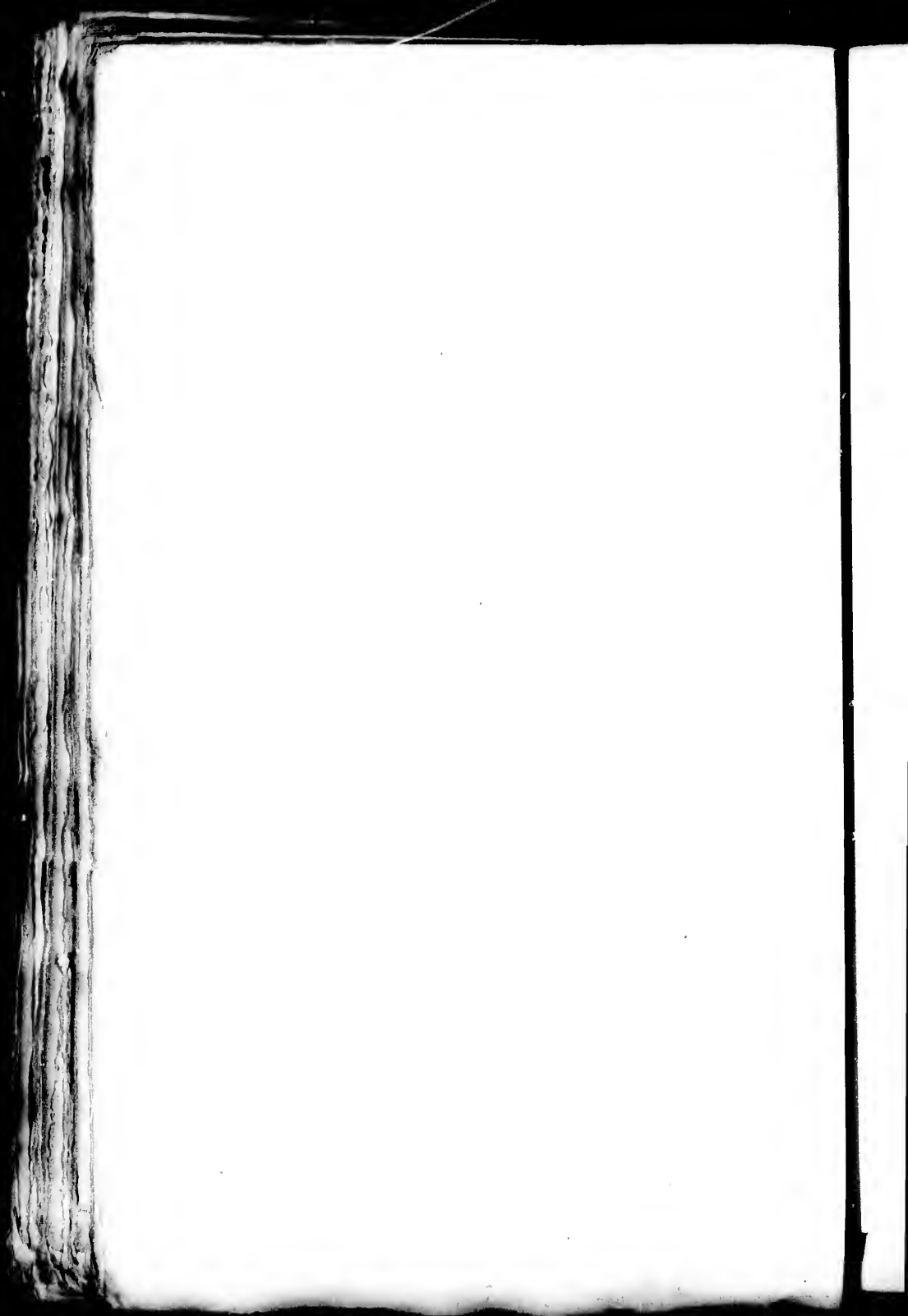


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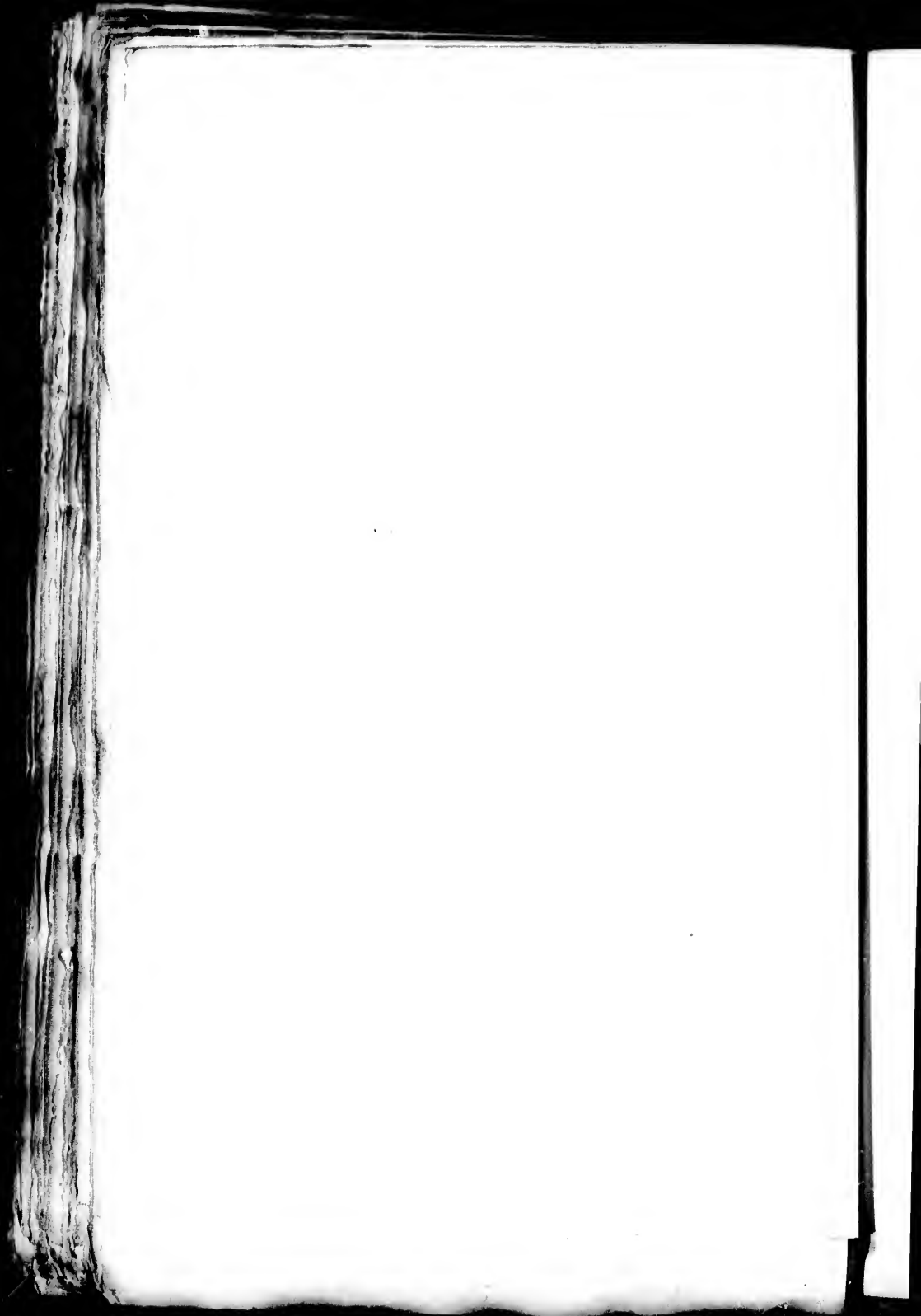
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[THE following ILLUSTRATIONS of the preceding work have been extracted from the private MSS. of LEWIS CASS, Esq. Governor of the Territory of Michigan. It is scarcely necessary to inform the public, that he has been for several years, *ex officio*, the superintendent of numerous tribes of Indians ; or to recall to mind his recent extensive tour to the sources of the Mississippi ; in order to give a value and interest to his observations on aboriginal subjects. The novelty and variety of the facts these illustrations exhibit, must render them important to the curious : and if they at the same time show, that the work to which they are appended—in the descriptive parts at least—has received its impressions from realities rather than from imagination, they may give to it a character higher than that of a mere work of fiction.]



## ILLUSTRATIONS.

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*No—'twas a spirit mild and meek  
That objects less sublime would seek :  
I scught the Indian of the wild,  
Nature's forlorn and roving child.*

Page 10, line 15, &c.

Early and strenuous efforts were made by the French to convert the Indians to civilization and Christianity. The zealous missionaries of the Roman Catholic religion carried the cross into the most remote regions which were then known. Establishments for this purpose were formed at Michilimackinac, at L'Arbre Croche, at St. Josephs, at Green Bay, and at other places. The object was prosecuted with zeal, industry and talents, worthy of more permanent success than has attended these labours. The difficulties, dangers and privations, which must have accompanied this intense and voluntary devotion of their lives, to the moral and physical melioration of our aboriginal inhabitants, can be fully appreciated by those only who are able to form some estimate of the condition and character of the country, at that early period. There was a generous self-de-

votedness in these apostles of Loyola, which nothing could have inspired, but the intensity of their zeal and their entire abstraction from all personal considerations. To suffer in a valued cause, and when surrounded by those who sympathize with the martyr, whether he be the victim of religious or of political intolerance, does not require the strongest effort of human resolution. Cranmer and Russell, no doubt, sought and found consolation in the nature of the causes for which they respectively suffered and died. The circumstances of the times had excited their feelings to an elevation proportioned to the crisis in which each of them was placed, and their martyrdom was seen and applauded and lamented by thousands. But in the solitude of the forest, removed from every trace of civilization, and surrounded by ruthless savages, these holy men had no crowds of witnesses, no powerful and temporary bursts of enthusiasm, no imposing external circumstances, to support them in the hour of danger and of death. The authentic records of their missionary labours show, that they were subjected to every danger and privation, which savage malignity could devise, or which human resignation could endure ; and many of them were murdered at the foot of the altar. No traces of their laborious exertions can now be discovered, in the manners or morals of the Indians. The hand of time has swept away the teacher and the neophyte ; and nothing now



remains to show, that the standard of Christianity has ever waved amid the dark forests of our country.

The lessons of experience upon this subject are too important to be disregarded. In the zealous efforts, which are now making, to meliorate the condition of the Indians, we have much to learn from the history of the progress and result of the same experiment, which was made by the Jesuits. We cannot bring to the task more fervid zeal, more profound talents, more extensive or varied acquirements, nor probably a deeper knowledge of the principles of human nature. But, so far as respects any permanent or valuable impression, they have wholly failed. Very few of the Indians profess any attachment to the Christian religion; and of those who make this profession, there is not probably one whose knowledge is not confined to the imposing rites and external ceremonies of the Catholic church. A more vivid impression appears to have been made upon the Wyandots, than upon any others; and they preserved, for a longer term than any other tribe, traces of the indefatigable exertions of their spiritual fathers: But even with them, superior as they are in intellectual endowments, and placed by their local situation in contact with a Catholic community, the subject is forgotten; or, if remembered, it is remembered only by a few aged and decrepid per-

sions, like other traditionary legends of their nation.

Fortunately for the cause of humanity, and for the discharge of the great moral debt which we owe to this miserable race of beings, deep interest has lately been excited upon this important subject. A spirit of inquiry has awakened, which cannot but produce beneficial results. The obligations under which we are placed, as an enlightened and Christian community, to teach our wretched neighbours the blessings of civilization and Christianity, are universally felt and acknowledged. We have driven them from the Atlantic to the Mississippi. Our forefathers, who landed upon this continent, found them numerous, high spirited, and powerful. They are now few, depressed, weak, and miserable. For the fair possessions which once were theirs, let us give them a more precious inheritance:—a gradual participation in those blessings, natural and intellectual, civil and religious, which have fallen to our lot.

There is reason to believe, that the failure of the Jesuits was owing to the principles upon which their operations were conducted, rather than to any intrinsic and insuperable difficulties in the object itself. It is easy to teach an Indian to comply with the external forms of the church; and he may make the sign of the cross, when he has no ideas, practical or speculative, upon the momentous subject which alone gives importance to these

ceremonies. Any change, to be permanent, must be gradual and general. We must teach the Indians, by their own observations, the value of our institutions. We must induce them to abandon their present erratic life, and to establish themselves permanently. We must convince them that the scanty and precarious subsistence, which is now furnished by the chase, will be acquired with less toil and more certainty, by the labour of agriculture. We must teach them, above all, the value of separate and exclusive property—the cardinal principle in our own attempts upon this subject. In fact their physical and moral improvement must be contemporaneous: Each will alternately act as cause and effect.

If this great cause be placed in proper hands, and prosecuted with zeal and judgment proportioned to its importance, we may safely anticipate a successful result. But it must be the work of time and labour. It cannot be accomplished speedily or easily. Inveterate habits must be eradicated, strong prejudices encountered, and the feelings and opinions of a whole race of human beings entirely changed, before complete success can attend our exertions. But, such a bloodless victory would be more important to the character of our country, than the most sanguinary battle which stains the pages of history.

*Through rocky isles, whose bolder forms  
Still chafed and fritter'd down by storms,  
And, worn to steeps of varying shape  
That architectural orders ape,  
Show ruin'd column, arch, and niche,  
And wall's dilapidated breach—*

Page 11, line 11, &c.

Upon the southern coast of Lake Superior, about fifty miles from the falls of St. Mary's, are the immense precipitous cliffs, called by the voyageurs, Le Portail, and the "*Pictured rocks*." This name has been given to them, in consequence of the different appearances which they present to the traveller, as he passes their base in his canoe. It requires little aid from the imagination, to discern in them the castellated tower, the lofty dome, spires and pinnacles, and every sublime, grotesque, or fantastic shape, which the genius of architecture has ever invented. These cliffs are an unbroken mass of rocks rising to an elevation of three hundred feet above the level of the Lake, and stretching along the coast for fifteen miles. The voyageurs never pass this coast except in the most profound calm; and the Indians, before they make the attempt, offer their accustomed oblations, to propitiate the favour of their Manitou. The eye instinctively searches along this eternal rampart for a single place of security: But the search is vain. With an impassable barrier of rock on one side and an interminable expanse of

water on the other, a sudden storm upon the lake would as inevitably insure destruction to the passenger in his frail canoe, as if he were on the brink of the cataract of Niagara. The rock itself is a sandstone, which is disintegrated, by the continued action of the water, with comparative facility. There are no broken masses upon which the eye can rest and find relief. The lake is so deep that these masses, as they are torn from the precipice, are concealed beneath its waters until they are reduced to sand. The action of the waves has undermined every projecting point; and there, the immense precipice rests upon arches, and the foundation is intersected by caverns extending in every direction. When we passed this mighty fabric of nature, the wind was still and the lake calm. But even the slight motion of the waves, which in the most profound calm agitates these internal seas, swept through the deep caverns with the noise of distant thunder, and died upon the ear, as it rolled forward in the dark recesses inaccessible to human observation: no sound more melancholy or more awful ever vibrated upon human nerves. It has left an impression, which neither time nor distance can ever efface. Resting in a frail bark canoe upon the limpid waters of the lake, we seemed almost suspended in air—so pellucid is the element upon which we floated. In gazing upon the towering battlements which impended over us, and from

which the smallest fragment would have destroyed us, we felt, and felt intensely, our own insignificance. No situation can be imagined, more appalling to the courage, or more humbling to the pride of man. We appeared like a small speck upon the face of creation. Our whole party, Indians and voyageurs and soldiers and officers and savans, contemplated in mute astonishment the awful display of creative power, at whose base we hung: and no sound broke upon the ear, to interrupt the ceaseless roaring of the waters.—No splendid cathedral, no temple built with human hands, no pomp of worship, could ever impress the spectator with such deep humility, and so strong a conviction, of the immense distance between him and the Almighty Architect.

The writer of this article has viewed the falls of Niagara, and the passage of the Potomac through the Blue Ridge, two of the most stupendous objects in the natural features of our country: The impression they produce is feeble and transient, when compared with that of the "Pictured rocks" of Lake Superior.

*When 'mid his chiefs, I saw my sire  
Awake on high the council fire.*

Page 25, lines 17 and 18.

No important business is ever transacted by the Indians, without kindling the council fire. This ceremony preceded the arrival of the European

upon this continent. It doubtless had its origin in the convenience, which was thus afforded the assembled multitude, for lighting their pipes. Their appetite for smoking is strong and inveterate. When those who are to participate in the deliberations of the council are convened, the great pipe is lighted, and the stem is held upwards, as a mark of adoration to the Great Spirit. After this ceremony it is smoked successively, in the order of rank, by all who are present : For this purpose it is carried by one of the Chiefs to every individual, who, without taking hold of the pipe with his hands, draws two or three puffs of the smoke : The council is then ready to investigate the business, for which it was convened. The Indians have two pipes, which are used upon solemn occasions : one is the great peace pipe, and the other the war pipe. They are severally smoked under circumstances sufficiently indicated by their names.

But the words "Council fire" are also used by the Indians, metaphorically, to indicate the place where their councils are held. Every village has its own fire, which is kindled whenever the inhabitants meet for deliberation. But all the different tribes, with whom we are acquainted, north of the Ohio and east of the Mississippi, were connected together, and had a general Council fire ; which was kept by the Wyandots at the mouth of the Detroit river. How long they had enjoyed this pre-emi-

nence, is doubtful. But the right of convening the other tribes to the Council fire, was possessed by this nation ; and when application for that purpose was made by any of the others, the Wyandots despatched the necessary wampum and tobacco—which are the credentials carried by the messengers. Some of the principal Chiefs from every quarter attended these councils ; and when they met, a fire was kindled by a flint and steel. After the council closed, this fire was carefully extinguished. All objects, affecting the Indians generally, were investigated and determined, upon these occasions. But the late war, which produced greater changes in the feelings and customs of the Indians, than the fifty years preceding had made, extended its effects to this institution. The council, and its members, and its objects, have disappeared, and the plough has passed over the site of the sacred fire.

*Has fill'd my dreams with deep alarms—*

Page 27, line 6.

The Indians have great confidence in dreams : They are considered as the immediate manifestations of the will of the Great Spirit ; and it is almost impossible to persuade them to disregard these impressions. The most important expeditions are sometimes stopped and turned back, by a dream of one of the party. In the year 1778, a party of about one hundred Chippewa warriors, led by



a Chief named Wa-be-gon-a, left Detroit upon a war excursion against the infant settlements in Kentucky. During the march, warrior after warrior abandoned the party, affected by the dreams which they had, or feigned to have ; until the number was reduced to twenty-three. When they arrived upon the Ohio, they struck a road apparently much travelled. They watched this road some time ; but not meeting with any success, they returned, and proceeded one day's march towards home. On the evening of this day, a British interpreter who was with the party, remonstrated against their return, and urged the Chief to remain in the country until they could strike the Americans. He dwelt upon topics obvious to the Indians ; and represented the disgrace which would attend an unfortunate expedition. The Chief finally consented to refer the question to a dream. He prepared himself for the approaching communication, and in the morning stated that the Great Spirit had appeared to him, and had directed him to watch the road again, until a party of the Americans should pass. The Indians returned with great confidence, stationed themselves upon the road, and there remained until a party approached—upon whom they fired. They took two scalps and three prisoners.

It was not difficult to perceive that this road was daily travelled, and the Chief hazarded little in advising his warriors to watch it. The whole

plan was probably contrived between him and the interpreter, to restore confidence to the dispirited party.

The Indians carry, in a prepared skin called *natte*, certain objects of worship, known by the name of Manitous. These Manitous are the stuffed skins of young minks, beavers, birds, and other animals. They are preserved with great care; and the *natte* always accompanies the war parties. It is carried by the principal Chief, during the march; and at night it is hung upon a pole, stuck in the ground on the side towards the enemy. Should any person incautiously pass between the *natte* and the enemy, the whole party would instantly return, and nothing would induce them to advance. When the Chief is anxious to consult the Great Spirit, respecting the result of the expedition, or the fate of any of his warriors, he sleeps with his head in contact with the *natte*. In this situation his dreams are prophetic.

It is obvious that the minds of the Indians are prepared for these impressions. Fasting, watching, long conversations and intense reflection upon the subject, produce the very result of which they are in pursuit. They dream because their faculties, intellectual and corporeal, are in a state of excitement most favourable to such an object.

*I'll seek, amid the howling storm,  
The Manitou's appalling form.*

Page 31, lines 5 and 6.

A full examination of the superstitious notions and practices of the Indians, would involve an extensive view of their mythology. It is difficult to procure accurate information upon the subject; and I think it probable that their own ideas are confused, and that the boundaries between the power of their good and bad spirits are not distinctly marked. They are desirous, upon all important occasions, of consulting the spirits, good or bad, respecting the result. There is a particular order of men, called Wa-be-no, in French—jongleurs, or (as they are called in English by the Canadians) thinkers—who are the medium of communication for this purpose. These Wa-be-no formed a society, which was perpetuated by the continued admission of new members. But the process of initiation was tedious, and some time elapsed before the candidate was admitted to a full participation in the benefits and knowledge of the society. The Wa-be-no, of all the tribes, had a common bond of union, and the principal members met annually near the Spring Wells, upon the Detroit river. At this periodical convocation, the rites of their order were celebrated with feasts and dancing, and the other imposing ceremonies which were appropriated to these western Eleusinian mysteries. The rank and influ-

ence of the different members, were determined by their knowledge of these ceremonies, and by the visitations which they felt or affected to feel. It is probable that fanaticism and hypocrisy had each their votaries among these "jongleurs."—The process preparatory to initiation, was well calculated to render them susceptible to the slightest impression. The candidate was shut up in a lonesome cabin, and was compelled to abstain from all food and drink, for many days. What is the extreme limit of human strength and resolution, in this state of total abstinence, I do not know: But there is an old Chippewa, now living, who is said to have been thus incarcerated for nine days. It is not difficult to conceive, that this discipline would prepare the youthful mind for strong and permanent impressions, and for a sublimation of the imagination, which might lead him to mistake the reveries of his own excited fancy, for the revelations of an invisible being. It is probable that the initiatory ceremonies fortified these impressions. And it is certain that this order of men acquired a preponderating influence over the minds of the Indians—An influence, too, which was extended to the traders and voyageurs, with whom they formerly had intercourse.

I am unwilling to recount the stories that are told upon this subject; the marvellous nature of which prove equally the dexterity of the actors, and the credulity of the spectators. Our earlier

writers upon Indian manners detail with great simplicity these evidences of a communication with evil spirits ; and I have heard aged and respectable Canadians relate facts which they supposed occurred before their own eyes, not less inconsistent with the ordinary operations of nature, than with the powers of a superintending Providence. These Wa-be-no are not only priests and prophets, but physicians. In September, 1819, during the treaty at Saginaw, Kish-ka-kon, the principal Chief of the Chippewas, was taken sick : He was offered medicine and the attendance of our physician, but having no confidence in either, he declined the offer. He sent for one of these men to effect a cure, and I saw him soon after the operation. He was afflicted with a chronic rheumatism, and complained much of a violent pain in his side : He told me, however, that the Wa-be-no had extracted a part of the disorder, and that there was no doubt of a perfect cure. It appeared that the operator, after many unmeaning ceremonies, had applied a hollow bone to the affected part, by means of which he pretended to suck out the disorder. He possessed the power of regurgitating a small portion of the contents of the stomach, and this he discharged from his mouth into a vessel. His credulous patient believed that it was extracted from the seat of the disorder.

One of these men was sent by a respectable Canadian to a gentleman in Detroit, who was dan-

gerously affected by an imposthume in his thigh. This man undertook the same process ; but, having around him more acute observers than he had before known, his whole operation was easily detected. One of his feats, which excited the greatest wonder among the Indians, was thrusting into his throat a stick twenty-three inches long.—Kish-ka-kon was firmly persuaded, that some enemy had, as they express it, thrown medicine at him—that is, had, by means of the Wa-be-no, induced the evil spirit to afflict him. This is a very prevailing superstitious notion among the Indians. When they are sick, or any accident happens to them, or they are unable to kill an abundant supply of game, this is the ready solution of the difficulty.

A few months since, an Indian applied to me for some whiskey. I inquired of him for what purpose he wanted it. He answered, that four years before, some person had thrown medicine at him, and that he had not been able, since that time, to kill any game. He wanted the whiskey to make a feast, the sovereign panacea for Indian misfortunes, and thus to be enabled to resume his employment as a hunter.

The Indians apply, under different circumstances, to the good and the bad spirit ; and the ceremonies in these different cases, are entirely dissimilar. My information does not enable me to state with precision, what circumstances deter-

mine, to whom the application shall be made. Generally, however, in all important questions affecting the tribe, and in all cases where supernatural assistance is required, the application is made to the good spirit. Where the object is to ascertain a future event, or to discover any thing which is lost, the inquirer is sent to the evil spirit. The same class of men are employed in each case ; but no present must be made when the good spirit is consulted. Being desirous of seeing the mode in which these tricks are executed, I requested one of the Wa-be-no to permit me to be present at the ceremony. He assented to my request—and was directed to ascertain the situation of some article accidentally lost. This farce was necessary, as he peremptorily refused to consult the evil spirit, unless some question were proposed for solution. Six stout poles were firmly placed in the ground in a hexagonal form. These poles were ten feet in height, and the diameter of the enclosure was, perhaps, four feet. Round these poles, on the outside, a number of blankets were stretched, and securely fastened. These blankets entirely intercepted the view ; and after the Wa-be-no had crawled in, the place of his entrance was shut and he was concealed from observation. The ceremony took place at night, and it thus became impossible to observe, with any accuracy, the progress of the imposture.

Immediately on his entrance, the poles were vio-

lently agitated, and he began a monotonous recitation, which I understood to be an invocation to the evil spirit to make his appearance. After some time the agitation increased, and we were informed that the evil spirit was about to appear. Profound silence was observed by the surrounding spectators, and another voice was heard from the lodge. It was then obvious, that the object of the Wa-be-no was, to induce his auditory to believe the evil spirit was conversing with him. For this purpose he changed as much as possible the tone of his voice, and spoke at one time close to the ground, and at another, at the greatest height to which he could attain. The deception was so gross, and the whole ceremony so tedious and uninteresting, that I retired without waiting for the termination.

When the good spirit is consulted, a feast is given, and a dog sacrificed. This dog is hoisted to the top of a long painted pole, and left in this situation. The Wa-be-no then retires to "*think*," sitting down with his head upon his hands, and his elbows resting upon his knees. In this situation, the answer of the good spirit is communicated to him.

*Arise, to war—with fellest whoop.*

Page 30, line 18.

That peculiar modulation of voice, which constitutes the "whoop" of the Indians, has long been known. It is impossible to give any ade-



quate idea of this sound, by a written description. It is shrill and piercing, and there is a striking elevation of the voice at the termination of each cry.

The Indians have at least four different kinds of whoops, the object of three of which is to communicate intelligence to their villages, as the warriors approach on their return from any expedition, without the trouble of an immediate explanation. These whoops are all different, and are perfectly understood; and they convey the desired information, with as much precision as one of our gazettes.

The whoop of joy is uttered by the warriors who return from a triumphant expedition, and indicates the number of scalps and prisoners they have taken. There is a peculiar inflection of it, by which the prisoners are distinguished from the scalps. The death-whoop designates the number of friends who have been killed during the expedition. The whoop of intelligence is uttered by a messenger, or other person, who has any thing important to communicate; and it is used to collect those who are within hearing, to receive the information.

The war-whoop is designed to strike their enemies with terror, and to inspire their friends with confidence, at the onset of a battle. In the silence of the night and in the solitude of the forest, this terrific sound is appalling.

When a party of warriors approaches a friendly

village, they give three distinct whoops, either of joy or grief, as their situation may require, to prepare the inhabitants for attention. After a short pause, they give as many separate whoops as there are individuals, at whose fate they rejoice or mourn.

At the treaty of St. Mary's, in 1818, a small party of Shawanese returned from a war excursion against the Osages, with a number of scalps. Before they reached the treaty ground, they announced their success by the whoops of joy, and the effect was electric upon the Indians. The vast multitude, who were present, rushed out to meet the returning warriors. The object appeared to be to seize the scalps, which were borne on poles, from those who carried them, and to hasten with them to their camps. I do not know whether any peculiar distinction was attached to the successful individuals in this strife, but certainly more exertions could not have been used, nor more zeal exhibited, had the object been to attack their enemies. Old and young joined the throng, and the scalps were snatched from hand to hand, and changed owners many times, before they reached their destination.

*Whose lengthen'd trench and mound enream*

*The banks of many a winding stream—*

Page 32, lines 15 and 16.

The remains of ancient art, which are scattered through the western regions, have been the

subject of observation since our first knowledge of the country. It is doubtful whether much real progress has been made in the investigation of this interesting inquiry. When, by whom, and why, these monuments of human industry were erected—are questions which, perhaps, will never be satisfactorily solved. The facts in our possession are not sufficiently numerous, to enable us to form even a plausible conjecture upon the subject.—Their extent and variety, instead of aiding, bewilder us. The labour of their erection is as much beyond the power of the present race of Indians, as the works themselves are unsuited to any purposes to which they could apply them. Their construction must have required a degree of skill in the plan, and of indefatigable industry in the execution, equally incompatible with the intellectual acquirements and present habits of the Indians.

These works are scattered through the whole valley of the Ohio, and through much of the Mississippi country. They are found as far north, at least, as Lake Pepin. They are not confined to any particular situation. We find them on hills and in valleys; in positions favourable to military defence, and in others, where they are completely commanded by elevated ground, and where defence would be impracticable.

A supply of water has not been deemed an indispensable requisite. Between Detroit and Chicago, in the midst of an immense plain, and re-

mote from any stream, one of these works yet remains. There are others similarly situated, with regard to water; and upon the Muskingum there are some on the most arid and elevated hills.

They are found in every state of preservation, and decay. In some, the walls are at least fifteen feet high, particularly near Newark and Lebanon, in Ohio; and the whole work is as distinct as it was upon the day of its completion. Others have almost mouldered away, and it is difficult to distinguish them from natural inequalities of ground. Some of them have ditches, and some are without; and these ditches are as often found on the inside as on the outside of the walls. There is an elevated mound in Marietta, enclosed with a wall, and having a ditch between the wall and the mound. It is impossible that this wall and ditch could have been made for any purposes of defence, because the elevation of the mound, which occupies the whole interior space, would have exposed those within to the attack of the assailants. Their form is as various as their situation. They are square, round, elliptical, hexagonal, and in almost every shape which fancy can imagine.

Their existence is a wonder, to which there is nothing comparable in our country. To account for their original erection, we are driven to conjecture, either that another race of men, superior in every social and intellectual quality to our present Indians, once inhabited these regions, and

were wholly extirpated or expelled ; or that the descendants of this people have forgotten the most useful arts of life, and have lost all remembrance of their own origin, with all the traditions of their ancestors.

Mr. Atwater, of Circleville, in Ohio, has evinced a laudable zeal to collect all the facts upon this subject, which now remain. It is to be hoped that his exertions will not be fruitless ; but that he will be aided by all, who are competent to prosecute the investigation. The time is rapidly passing away when plans and elevations of these places can be taken. They will soon disappear before the plough and the other changes of civilization, and we shall regret, when too late, that no extensive information has been collected, from which some rational induction can be drawn respecting these evidences of ancient industry which yet withstand the shock of time.

I have been credibly informed, that among the ancient belts preserved by the Wyandots are some, which relate to the people who erected these works, and to the history of their wars and final discomfiture. It is customary among the Indians to prepare a belt for every important fact, interesting to the nation. These belts are preserved with great care among the public archives, and are, in fact, the records of their history. The traditions are transmitted with great minuteness, and the belts are not only evidences of the

fact, but, by the powers of association, aid the memory of those whose duty it is to preserve them. If these belts relate to those remote events, they were undoubtedly made at the time when the events occurred ; and may be considered as authentic documents, coeval with the foundation of these works. The tradition is, that they were built for the purpose of defence ; and that their founders, after many years of sanguinary warfare, were expelled, and sought refuge in the country southwest of the Mississippi. The present race of Indians claim to be the descendants of the conquerors.

*Lest thou shouldst fail the feast to share,  
Our gathering bands will soon prepare—*

Page 35, lines 5 and 6.

A feast generally concludes every important ceremony in which the Indians engage. Their war and hunting excursions, their councils, their funerals and marriages, are all accompanied by the appropriate feast. Some of these feasts are given by individuals, who generally invite the whole village. Others are at the common expense, and all who participate, bring some part of the provisions.

When a man gives an entertainment of this nature, it is expected that his guest will eat all the provisions which are placed before him. Fortunately for the preservation of this rule, there pro-

bably never was a race of men better qualified for the observance of such a custom. Their appetite is voracious, and their powers of eating beyond any example known among civilized nations.

I saw a feast among the Sioux, upon the Mississippi, from which the guests retired backwards, carrying with them their dishes filled with victuals. —I could not learn the meaning of this ceremony.

*For stern composure, full of thought,  
Had to his mien submission taught,  
And bliss or wo pass'd o'er his mind,  
Nor light nor shadow left behind.*

Page 57, line 15, &c.

The indifference of the Indians to external circumstances, is a prominent trait in their character. This indifference is habitually acquired, and is similar in its effects to the stoical fortitude of antiquity. It is not alone in pain and grief, that any display of their feelings is suppressed. The gentler affections of the heart, although powerfully felt, are yet carefully concealed. When an Indian returns, after considerable absence, to his family, he affects to be cold and careless, and he suffers much time to elapse before he enters into familiar conversation. I have seen intimate friends, after a long separation, meet and pass each other like strangers. They have none of the courtesies of life; nor do they affect, by a cordial salutation, an attachment which they do not feel.

This abstraction from the effect of external circumstances, accompanies them in every situation of life. An Indian bears pain with fortitude, he faces danger without fear, and meets death with calmness. His character and importance depend not only on active courage, but also on this patient resignation to adverse circumstances, and this calm contempt of untoward events. That man has observed human nature with a careless eye, who has not discovered, how much more rare the latter quality is, than the former.

*Now gathers round the warlike throng,  
Prepared for feast and dance and song.*

Page 58, lines 7 and 8.

When circumstances have inclined the minds of the Indians to war, a Council is convened, in which the subject is fully investigated, and finally determined. After the war is declared, the authority of the village or peace Chiefs entirely ceases, and the power is transferred to the war Chiefs.

Their government, if government it may be called, is one of opinion only. No direct authority is ever exerted; and their war expeditions are composed of volunteers, who join and leave the party at their pleasure. When it is determined to undertake an expedition, all the warriors are assembled, and a feast is prepared. The principal Chief then takes his tomahawk, or war club, upon which the head of an enemy is sculptured, and begins to



move. Sometimes, however, a war belt, made for this purpose, is carried. The tomahawk, or club, is held in a threatening position, and the Chief slowly passes in front of every individual, singing, as he moves, his war song. This war song is not the usual boasting recapitulation of their exploits, which is occasionally made by the warriors in their dances—and which is a mere recitation, without any attempt at harmony. The words of the song are strictly adapted to the music. The sentiment, in all the songs, is a mere repetition of a few leading ideas, and is constantly renewed in the progress of the Chief—who marches to the time of his own music.

The following specimens will convey to the reader a general notion of these songs. (They were actually sung upon important occasions.)

“ I will kill—I will kill—the Big Knives, I will kill.”

“ Ne-gau-ne-saw—ne-gau-ne-saw—Kichi-mau-le-sa, ne-gau-ne-saw.”

The Indian words in this song are Miami.

“ I will go and get my friends—I will go and get my friends. I am anxious to see my enemies—I am anxious to see my enemies. A clear sky is my friend, and it is him I am seeking.”

‘ A clear sky’ is a metaphorical expression, and conveys to an Indian the same ideas which are conveyed to us by the words, good fortune.

The manner in which these words are sung can-

not be described to the reader. There is a strong expiration of the breath at the commencement of each sentence, and a sudden elevation of the voice at the termination. The Chief, as he passes, looks every person sternly in the face: Those who are disposed to join the expedition, exclaim *Yeh, Yeh, Yeh*, with a powerful tone of voice; and this exclamation is continually repeated during the whole ceremony. It is, if I may so speak, the evidence of their enlistment. Those who are silent, decline the invitation.

After the Chief has procured as many volunteers as possible, he delivers the tomahawk to another Chief. The latter then repeats the same process. Particular prejudices or partialities may induce the warriors to follow one Chief in preference to another; and efforts are therefore made by all, to increase the strength of the party. The whole ceremony is terminated by a general feast.

In the year 1776, during the administration of Lieutenant Governor Hamilton at Detroit, a large number of Indian warriors were assembled, in order that they might be induced to co-operate with the British in the war, which had then commenced. They were drawn up in two lines, extending from the river to the woods: their kettles and fires were between the lines. An ox was killed, and his head cut off: a large tomahawk was then struck into the head, and thus loaded, it was presented to

the Governor: He was requested to sing his war song along the whole line of the Indians.

The ox's head represented the head of an American; and as the British were the principals in the war, it was necessary for them to take up the tomahawk first. The Lieutenant Governor was embarrassed by the novelty of his situation, and by his own ignorance of the language and songs of the Indians. He was extricated, in a manner equally happy and ludicrous, by his Interpreter. The latter instructed his superior to sing the following words, in French:

Quand j'irai a la guerre-ruh

J'emporterai ma grand cuillere-ruh.

The monosyllable at the end of each line, is only intended to mark the elevation of the voice, and the prolongation of the last syllable.

These words corresponded with the necessary tune, and were sung with all the gravity and dignity suited to the occasion. As the Lieutenant Governor passed the immense assemblage, he sung his song and fixed his eyes upon the Indians, who made the air resound with their cries of *Yeh, Yeh, Yeh*. They concluded, of course, that the great warrior was threatening with dreadful vengeance, the *Big Knives*, the rebellious children of their British father.

The second officer in command, Major Hayes, was relieved by a similar expedient. The ingenious Interpreter composed the following song,

which possessed the same advantage of an accompaniment to the music.

*J'ai le talon, au bout du pied.*

The ordinary war dance is peculiarly appropriate at the departure of the warriors upon any expedition, or upon their return: but it is used at all times, by the young men, as an exercise and amusement. When they are disposed to undertake this dance, they strip themselves almost naked, and paint their faces and bodies agreeably to the taste of every individual. It is probable that this custom had its origin in a desire to strike terror into their enemies, by the horrible alternations of light and shade, with which they are daubed. The imagination cannot draw a stronger picture of the inhabitants of the infernal regions, than is presented by these dances. Every person holds in his hands a weapon; and their heads are adorned with a great display of feathers and other appropriate ornaments. Hollow cylinders of wood, resembling drums—covered with dressed skin at one end, are beat for the purpose of marking time.

Their mode of dancing is, by continually jumping up and down, sometimes in the same place, and sometimes advancing. Their muscular exertion, upon these occasions, is great: Every limb, and almost every muscle, are in action; and the whole frame is in a continued state of tension. They keep time with perfect precision, and no

eye can detect the slightest variation. They brandish their weapons in every direction ; and I have been often surprised that accidents do not occur, on such occasions. Knives and tomahawks are aimed with apparently fatal precision ; but are turned with great dexterity, before they inflict the threatened wound. Every warrior continually repeats the well known sound *Yeh*, in the most forcible manner.

After they have danced some time—one of them steps to a post, previously secured in the ground for this purpose, and violently strikes it with his weapon. Instantly the music, and the exclamations, and the dancing, cease ; and every warrior is prepared to hear a tale of “daring.” The person who has struck, then recounts his exploits. He speaks with great emphasis and violent gesticulation,—describes the number of the enemy whom he has killed ; the mode in which he accomplished it, and the dangers he encountered. He relates the most minute circumstances, and shows the manner in which he crept silently upon his enemy, and took aim at his heart. He exhibits his scars, and relates the occasions upon which he received them.

After he has concluded, all the Indians present give a general shout, to testify their admiration of his prowess. The dance then recommences, and is again interrupted in a similar manner.

*The star of day was just descending—*

Page 72, line 1.

The hostile attacks of the Indians are almost always made in the night ; and generally a short time before day. They are not as vigilant and watchful in defence, as they are in attack. Nothing can exceed the caution and silence with which they move, and they frequently enter their enemy's camp before the latter is apprized of their approach. The melancholy catastrophe, which closed the campaign of General St. Clair, in 1791, is matter of historic record. About daylight he was attacked by the Indians ; and after a feeble and desultory resistance, his army was dispersed or destroyed. General Harrison narrowly escaped the same fate at Tippecano ; and he owed his success to his own skill and experience, and to the valour and discipline of his troops.

The effect of this mode of attack upon men suddenly awakened from profound sleep, may be readily appreciated. The stillness and solitude of the night are interrupted by the Indian war-whoop—one of the shrillest and most terrific sounds that can be imagined : at the instant of uttering this horrible yell, which is well calculated to dismay their enemy, the assailants commence their attack ; and this sound is heard above the ordinary accompaniments of the battle.

When we review the peculiar adaptation of their tactics to the description of their forces,

and to the nature of their warfare, it is certainly surprising that their campaigns have not generally terminated more successfully. To an intimate knowledge of the theatre of operations, they join ceaseless caution, great personal intrepidity, a power of enduring the extremes of fatigue and hunger, which rarely fall to our lot, and all those "circumstances of war," which are calculated to inspire them with confidence, and to depress the spirit of their enemies. But they have no combination in their movements: their attacks are, in fact, the efforts of individuals: and the authority of their Chiefs is feeble and useless. That result of discipline and subordination, which renders every combatant an effective part of one great machine, is wholly unknown to them, — and their operations are thus without concert in the plan, and without union in the execution.

*And tinged the pile with gloomy light,  
Which stood before the captive's sight.*

Page 77, lines 17 and 18.

*And thus, amid the insulting throng,  
Raised high and bold his victim song.*

Page 78, lines 9 and 10.

The custom of sacrificing prisoners by the Indians to their own baleful passions, is well known; and the instances of this shocking ceremony are numerous and authentic. A small proportion of the captives, however, are thus murdered: Many of them are adopted into different families, to

supply the loss of deceased relatives, and are treated, in every respect, like the natural members of the family.—But when an important Chief is killed, or when the surviving relatives of a warrior who has fallen in battle are anxious to revenge his death, an unfortunate captive is selected for this sacrifice.

These devoted victims of savage cruelty are usually burned at the stake. Among the Miamis, a hoop is passed round the neck, and fastened to a cord, which is tied to another hoop connected with a post. This post is firmly secured in the ground; and the limbs of the unfortunate sufferer are free. Fires are kindled on four sides of the post—and the Indians, with lighted hickory bark, compel the wretched being to move round this infernal apparatus of cruelty and death. Hours are thus spent in this scene of torment, until human nature sinks exhausted; or until some Indian, more humane, or more strongly excited than the others by the keen and boastful death-song of the sufferer, terminates by a sudden stroke, his sufferings and their persecutions. Among the Kickapoos, a frame is built, to which the captive is attached by his hands and feet; and he thus slowly perishes without the power of motion.

Examples of the most heroic fortitude have been exhibited under these awful circumstances. The Indians appear to be prepared to suffer pain with indifference, as well as to inflict it without mercy. In whatever situation they may be placed,



whether as persecutors or as sufferers, their spirit is excited to the highest point of elevation. It is the object of the one party to torment with the greatest ingenuity, and to protract, to the last hour, the death of the victim. The other sings his death-song, and exhibits his contempt for his enemies by every reproachful epithet, and by every provoking tale: He recounts the number of their warriors whom he has killed in battle; of their women and children whom he has murdered; and of the injuries, insults, and cruelties, he has inflicted upon their nation. His song is commonly interrupted by the tomahawk of some indignant foe.

In the year 1774, a war party of the Kickapoos made an irruption into the country of the southern Indians. A prisoner was taken, and sentenced to be burned. The sentence was executed on the Vermilion river; and I have been told, by a person present, that a more striking example of fortitude, and of elevated feelings, cannot be imagined. He appeared wholly abstracted from all corporeal sufferings. And though the pain must have been intense and exquisite, from the fierce zeal displayed by his enemies to conquer his proud spirit, yet not a word, look, nor motion, evinced the slightest regard to his own situation. I cannot persuade myself to give the details, of this horrible contest between the power to inflict and the capacity to suffer. The captive sung his death-song in the loudest and fiercest

strain, and repeatedly gave the whoop of joy, which is exclusively appropriated to the conquering warrior. His resolution finally triumphed; for one of his enemies, frantic with passion, shot him through the heart.

During our revolutionary war, a father and son were taken prisoners by the Miamis, in some part of Kentucky. The father was advanced in years, and the son on the verge of manhood. The latter was burned at Massisimeway. When the sentence was communicated to the unfortunate captives, the father entreated that he might die for his son: But his request was refused, and the interesting young man bore the torments of his enemies more than three hours, in the presence of his father. \* \* \* \* \*

Thanks to the knowledge of our feelings and institutions, which the Indians have acquired, this horrible custom has nearly disappeared. Their own manners have become meliorated by their contact with us. During the late war, instances of savage cruelty were frequent and atrocious; and the awful catastrophe at the River Raisin, in which, however, to the disgrace of Christianity and civilization, the guilt does not attach to them only, has long since been disclosed to our country and to the world. But I have not heard that any prisoners were burned; nor were they often murdered, after the passions excited by the battle had time to subside. Connected with these barbarous sacrifices, a singular and shocking in-

stitution existed among the Miamis and Kickapoos, to which no parallel can be found among the other tribes, nor, perhaps, in the whole record of human depravity. A society existed, called "the man-eaters," whose duty it was to eat my prisoners, devoted to this horrible purpose by those who captured them. This society was coeval with the earliest traditions of either tribe; and the institution was associated with religious sentiments, and with feelings of reverence in the minds of the Indians. Its members belonged to one family, called "the bear," which, however, included many individuals. They were admitted into the society by a secret and solemn initiation, and with many imposing ceremonies. This right, or duty, for I cannot ascertain in which light the admission was viewed, extended to males and females; and the whole number, at the period to which my information relates, was about twenty. But I am ignorant whether there was any limitation of number, except by the exclusion of individuals from the sacred family.

On ordinary occasions, when a prisoner is sacrificed, it is done to gratify the revenge of the near relations of a fallen warrior: But when these relatives are strongly excited, either in consequence of the natural strength of their passions, or of a peculiar attachment to the deceased, or of any uncommon circumstances attending his death, the prisoner is then sentenced to a specific death and to be delivered to the "Man-eaters." They

take possession of him, and execute him in conformity with the sentence. After being delivered to them, there is no power to ransom him : His fate is irreversibly fixed.

In the year 1780, an American captive was sacrificed at Fort Wayne. There were ten men and three women, members of the society, present, who conducted the ceremony. An effort was made by the traders to save the life of the victim : Goods to a considerable value were offered for this purpose, but in vain. At the commencement of the preparations, another messenger was sent with a quantity of spirits, the most valuable article, which could be offered to effect the object. He barely escaped with his life from the fury of the society, who were thus interrupted in their duties by unwelcome importunities ; and the spirits were instantly spilt upon the ground. After the prisoner was dead, his body was carried to a retired camp, cut up, and boiled. It was then eaten by the members of the society. The cooking utensils, and other articles used upon these occasions, were kept in a small separate lodge, and were never used for any other purpose.

One of the members of this society, called "White Skin," an influential Miami Chief, is yet living. But the institution itself has disappeared ; and such is the change in the feelings of the Indians upon these subjects, that he is sometimes reproached with this connexion, formerly so much venerated and respected. It has been stated that

the celebrated Chief, Little Turtle, was active in the abolition of this horrible practice. Such an exertion was in unison with his character and principles.

There is no doubt, however, but that the general feelings of the age are gradually making their way into the fastnesses of the Indians, and that these feelings have principally contributed to this happy result. Cannibals have doubtless existed in certain ages and nations of the world: And although the details of the practice are involved in some obscurity, yet the leading facts are indisputable. But, probably, no particular body of men was ever before set apart for this purpose, and required to devour a miserable being, in order that the revenge of bereaved friends might be more exemplary. It is an atrocious refinement of vengeance, to which the history of the world may be challenged for a parallel.

It may be regretted that there are no traditional accounts of the institution of this society. We are utterly at a loss to conjecture how it was established, why, and by whom. But its history is lost in the lapse of ages, and all that is left for us is, while we explore the facts which now remain, to rejoice at the gradual melioration which is taking place in the manners and feelings of the Indians.

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[Since the foregoing memorandum of the Man-eating society was made, the following more mi-

nute particulars have been received from the present principal Chief of the Miamis.

The general name of the family, to which the society is exclusively confined—the name which it has always borne—is *Ons-e-won-sa*. The word has no precise or known meaning. The name of the present head of the family is *Am-co-me-we-au-kee*, or the *Man-eater*; whose family, in all its branches, now consists of fifteen or twenty members. The succession is continued in the male line; and the eldest male living is always the head. There is no ceremony of initiation: no extraneous members can be admitted: the members are born into the society, and have no choice but to inherit its atrocious privileges. When a victim is selected, his face is painted black; and, after he has been given up to the society, his fate is irrevocable. New utensils must be provided for every new sacrifice. Every member of the society is bound in duty to partake of the horrible repast,—infants and all; but, although public, no other person dares profane the sanguinary ceremony. During, or at the conclusion of the feast, the head repeats, for the instruction of the younger members, its tradition and its duties.—The Chief above alluded to, says, that the society is now seldom mentioned; and a disuse of its practices for more than thirty years, has obliterated almost every thing connected with it, excepting its name and its members.]

