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The hemlock tree and its legends.



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THE
HEMLOCK TREE,
AND
ITS LEGENDS.

BY
ROBERT BRADBURY.

PHILADELPHIA:
JOHN DUROSS, PRINTER,
BLACK HORSE ALLEY.

1859.

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P R E F A C E.

It is the general custom when anything new is brought before the public in the shape of a book, to preface it with a few remarks explanatory of the origin and design of the work; sometimes an apology is offered, and often an humble petition for leniency. The author of the present little work does not wish to be altogether out of fashion, and therefore, more as an explanation than anything else, offers the following remarks to those who may wish to read them. Apology he makes none; his attempt is justified in the motive. His design was to save from destruction one of those vast monuments of antiquity which Nature has scattered so plentifully over the American continent, and which, Sir Walter Scott, according to Washington Irving, declared were far superior to anything that art has or can pro-

duce. I speak of the gigantic trees that abound in the American forest. And as the first part of this work, that is, the petition of the Hemlock Tree, was published previous to that of Abbotsford, it was a gratification to find that two such as have just been mentioned, should, at least in this particular, agree in the same sentiment with himself.

The Tree which is the subject of the forepart of this work, and, indeed, the cause of the whole production, is at present growing at Garrattsville, a small village, beautifully located in one of the finest of those rich valleys that abound in the State of New York, in the town of New Lisbon, and the county of Otsego, about fifteen or sixteen miles from Cooperstown, a place rendered classical by the tales of the Deerslayer and Leatherstocking.

The writer once lived at the Villa named above, and frequently resorted to the foot of the Hemlock Tree when he wished to enjoy the luxury of a book without interruption. Its immense size and beauty commanded his admiration; its vast age, his veneration. He used to fancy that his thoughts, when under that tree, flowed more

freely and more sweetly than anywhere else. Doubtless this was all fancy, but it is nevertheless a fact, and it will account for the affectionate regard that he had for it.

It was with astonishment and regret that, on visiting this favorite haunt, after an absence of two or three weeks, he beheld almost all the trees in the immediate neighborhood felled by the ruthless axe, and an envious cut into the Old Hemlock himself, showing the design to be to sweep off everything in the shape of a tree from the place, without regard to beauty, size, or antiquity. After beholding the desolation for some time, he returned home, and ascertaining there that the land had changed owners, and that the present owner was Mr. Berthier Whitford, a gentleman to the Author well known, and one who, though an industrious and thriving farmer, could yet find time and take delight in a good book, it occurred to the Author that, if he could only see him before the tree was cut down, it would be no hard matter to induce him to spare it. Taking a little refreshment, he resolved to visit him forthwith; but, previously remembering that old song, "Woodman, spare that tree,"

the idea that Mr. Whitford was the very man to appreciate a few verses in behalf of the Old Hemlock, and having sometimes before dabbled in rhymes, he at once set about the composition of that which is now given to the public. When he sat down to his task he had no intention of writing more than five or six stanzas, but having begun, and finding the matter opening before him in a manner that surprised as well as gratified him, it occurred that it would not be difficult to make the Old Tree the medium of a number of Indian legends, which is hinted at in the petition of the Hemlock Tree. The petition, however, was all that was done at that time; and the Author gratefully states that it had the desired effect. Without communicating with any one in the place, he sent it to the *New Berlin Herald*, a paper that was much read in Garratts-ville, and it was printed. When the Author went to get his paper, he found the Postmaster reading the very piece to about a dozen of the villagers, Mr. Whitford amongst them. When it was finished, there was an inquiry, Who was the author? and, although no name was attached to it, except a fictitious one, the Postmaster pointed

the Author out, declaring that he had mailed a letter to the Editor in his handwriting a few evenings before, and as he had been known to frequent the tree, it was useless to deny it. Mr. Whitford declared that it should not be cut down; that the tree should be presented to the Author; and it was so, in the presence of most of the villagers, with a rod of land on every side of it. And the Author believes, had he asked it, an acre would just as freely have been given to him. And when the Author left the neighborhood a few years after, and now twenty years since, he left the inhabitants as trustees and guardians of the tree; and although he has not seen it since, he has no doubt it is still flourishing, and likely to do so for ages after the present generation have done with everything that pertains to earth.

One word more of the Tree. The Author has seen many trees in the Old Country that were larger in diameter, but they seldom reached a quarter of its altitude; and, although he has travelled over perhaps thirty thousand miles of this Continent, he has never seen one that would compare with it for size or general beauty.

Another word. The petition of the Tree was written under the similitude of a dream. The poet fancied himself, or he really was, asleep, under the Tree, for he has had many a nap under it, when he thought the woodman came to cut it down, and was addressed by the Tree, as stated in the book. He makes no apology for making the Tree speak. Things quite as extraordinary are to be found in Homer, Virgil, Milton, Shakespeare, Ariosto, and others. And though he does not presume that he can, for a moment, be compared to any of these, yet he thinks that, at least that part of his production which has them for an example, perhaps may pass.

Being often requested to repeat it, and asked for a copy, he determined to publish it; and, as it was too small of itself, he has thus far endeavored to carry out his original design.

R. B.

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THE HEMLOCK TREE,

AND

ITS LEGENDS.

TREE.

STAY, woodman, stay thy cruel hand,
And strike me not another blow ;
Withhold that fearful flaming brand,
With which thou'st laid my brethren low.

And ere thou tak'st my life away,
With which intent thou'rt hither come,
Attend to what I have to say
In mitigation of my doom.

Once we a noble family were ;
In numbers, thousands we could tell ;

As tall, as straight, as neat, as fair,
As comely, as your proudest belle.

In undisturbed repose we slept;
Trouble we did not know, for then
Beneath our shade had never stepped
The hateful feet of civilized men.

But since we've known your hated race,
No peace or comfort have we known;
Of joy or hope, no single trace
Is left for us, but all are flown.

I've seen you cut my brethren down,
By all the hellish furies led,
Till o'er the earth, for miles around,
Your marks of desolation spread.

Then what the axe had spared, the fire,
As though 'twas not enough to kill,
Displayed your everlasting ire,
That after death continued still.

Now why is this? what have we done
That you should be our constant foes?
To us, at least, it is unknown.
Speak, if there's one of you that knows!

What, silent! then we're wronged, 'tis plain:
You know we never injured you.
Of rank injustice we complain,
And you by silence own 'tis true.

Again, for me: I am your friend;
I serve you with a ready will;
Whene'er I could your wants attend,
I ever did, and shall do still.

How oft beneath the burning sun
You've sought my cool refreshing shade!
How oft, when sudden storms have come,
My arms for you a shelter made!

The great, the noble, and the wise,
Towards me would have but one desire:

A tree of such a noble size
They'd keep for others to admire.

A monument of bygone days,
I've kept the place where now I grow ;
And, over all, my head did raise
Above a thousand years ago.

What mighty changes in that space !
What revolutions on the earth !
What strange events have taken place !
What wonders ! since I date my birth !

Of these I have laid up a store,
And at your service they shall be ;
When you would think on days of yore
Come sit beneath the Hemlock Tree.

In every branch I have a tongue,
I have a voice in every breeze ;
And when I speak to old or young,
My aim is to instruct and please.

There's scarce a place of any note,
On th' Eastern Continent's wide plains,
But they some monument have got,
Some ancient relic's last remains.

Now these they ever sacred hold,
Preserve them with the greatest care,
That strangers may the sight behold,
Posterity the relic share.

With you these monuments are rare,
With you indeed the country's new ;
To Nature you indebted are
For all that older is than you.

But blush not you that 'tis the case,
Nature will never be outdone ;
Her monuments no art can raise,
From her no laurels can be won.

Her monuments throughout the land,
Since Earth from Chaos sprung to light,

Have stood, and shall forever stand,
Till Earth again returns to night.

Your Southern hills that reach the sky,
And in the West each inland sea ;
Niagara's Falls, whose fame stands high :
At Garrattsville your Hemlock Tree.

And though I am but little known,
The time is coming fast, I see,
When strangers from afar will roam,
To take a look at even me.

For it was only yesternight
I overheard a poet say,
That he on me some lines would write,
And to the printer send his lay.

Now if the press its power and skill
Employs, to lift me into fame,—
And I'm inclined to think it will,—
I then shall have a deathless name.

Besides, I am but in my bloom,
No signs of age in me appear ;
And who knows what I may become
If spared,—I'm growing every year !

WOODMAN.

Stay; hold thy peace ; thy prayer is heard !
Argue thy cause no more with me,
For here I pledge my sacred word
No farther harm shall come to thee.

'Tis true, I've cut thy brethren down,
And would have done the same to thee ;
But may I meet with Fortune's frown
If e'er I hurt the Hemlock Tree.

No ! stand thou still, as stood thou hast
Above a thousand years gone by :
A shelter from the stormy blast,
A shade beneath the burning sky.

But give me in my turn a plea :
That thou wouldst open up thy store,

And issue to the world through me,
A portion of thy ancient lore.

Some history of former days,—
Some legendary tale unfold,
That happened 'neath thy lofty gaze,
Instructive to both young and old.

T R E E.

Thanks, friend ! and what return I may,
In gratitude for life preserved,
I here will make ; but thou must say,
Of all that ever I observed,

What portion I shall now relate,—
Some public or some private theme,
Pertaining to a tribe or state,
Or to some individual name.

Full oft beneath my shade hath held
Some powerful tribe its council fire,
And what I may not have beheld,
I've heard from many an aged sire.

Full oft some bold heroic chief,
To love of fame his tribe would raise,
In words of fire; and full, though brief,
Some would he blame, and some would praise.

And oft the poet named before,
Close at my feet would take his place;
And many a book of ancient lore
He'd read, and wondrous matters trace.

WOODMAN.

Nay, please thyself; for well I ween
Whate'er thou choolest to impart,
Of all that is or may have been,
Will yield a pleasure to my heart.

TREE.

Well, listen then, and I will tell
What, centuries ago, befell
The Indian race—their love, their hate,
Their courage, wisdom, hapless fate;

Their manners, customs, way of life ;
Their hunting feats, their deadly strife ;
Their virtues, start not, even they
Had real virtues, in their way.
And some of them might well compare
With all that have been or that are,—
The far-off sons of Greece or Rome,
Or those more modern nearer home.
Whate'er of Hector may be said,
Achilles, Ajax, Diomed,
Or Rome's proud sons that ruled the world,
And kings and states to ruin hurled,
May of the red man too be told,
As you shall presently behold.
Then what the Indian says is true,
He never vaunts what he can do ;
He lets his actions tell his fame,
And from his deeds he gets his name,—
His name he gets for what he's done,
Nor gets that name till fairly won.

THE LEGEND.

PART I.

'Tis now four hundred years or near,
A tribe of Indians settled here ;
That tribe could count a thousand men
Such as will ne'er be seen again.
Alas, they've suffered such decay
That sires and sons have passed away.
From Mississippi's banks they came,
And Wappanachi was their name.
Fathers of all the tribes around,
They owned a vast extent of ground,
That reached the Hudson in the east,—
To the Potomac's banks at least.
A nobler, more heroic race,
Were never found in any place.
In war, they fought whilst they had breath,
And never yielded but to death.
In peace, their milder virtues shone,—
Their hands, their heads, their hearts were one.
They lived in harmony and joy,
Fast bound by every friendly tie ;

And though your whiter race lay claim
To greater powers and greater fame,
The red man, to his teachings true,
Does what he thinks is right. Do you?
Your moral code, by far the best
With which mankind were ever blessed,
How oft, alas! without a blush,
How oft, beneath your feet you crush!
Good laws, if much by vices stained,
Are worse than bad laws well maintained;
Then let enlightened vice away,
And good, though erring, with us stay.
Enough! you now know what I mean,
So back I'll hasten to my theme;
And will henceforth, with heart and might,
Denounce what's wrong, uphold what's right;
And with what powers within me lay
Pursue a plain but honest way.

The chief that o'er this tribe held sway,
And whom the rest well pleased obey,
Of stature tall, of lofty mien,
His glance was, as the eagle's, keen;

His soul disdained the earth he trod ;
He owned no master but his God.
His name, War Eagle, for his might,
And foes he'd overcome in fight.
Bold as the king of beasts, no fear
Entered his breast when foes were near.
But when at length his battles fought,
In milder mood his home he sought,
He still would watch each new alarm,
To keep his tribe from every harm ;
And such his ever-watchful care,
His tribe feared nothing he being there.
A warrior all his life he'd been,
And fifty years or more had seen.
In short, to sum up all in brief,
His matchless worth had made him chief.
His tent, the centre of his band,
Stood on that rising knoll of land
That lies a little north of you,
And over all commands a view.
Within that tent, its folds inclose
The scalps of full two hundred foes,

Whom, when engaged in mortal strife,
War Eagle's arm bereft of life.

Some other chiefs, and chiefs of might,
Equal in council and in fight,
Of dauntless heart, of virtues rare,
Might with the chief in fame compare :
The Eagle Eye, that knew no fear ;
The Ready Hand, the Bounding Deer,
The Beaver, persevering, bold ;
And the Great Serpent, much extolled,—
But where's the use, or where's the gain,
Should I each individual name,
Where all alike could only be
Warlike and bold, heroic, free.

Their enemies, for such they had,
Alas, 'tis this that makes me sad,—
That men should live in deadly hate,
And work themselves so dire a fate ;
For had they all as one combined,
And in one bond been firmly joined,
Your race had here no footing gained,
Or else that footing not maintained.

Their enemies, a powerful band,—
East, west, and north, on every hand,—
Five mighty tribes together joined
In one fell purpose; all combined
To harass, slay, exterminate,
The Wappanachi, small and great.
For each, subdued in former fight,
Had learned the Wappanachi's might,
And knew that further to contend,
Their hopes of vengeance sure must end.
Each had been forced to move away,
And leave in undisputed sway
Their stronger foe; yet hating still
Their conqueror, as men always will.
For, call it Providence or fate,
The conquered still their victors hate;
And very easy 'tis to show
The wise Creator made it so,
That every nation, people, tongue,
Might help the weak against the strong,—
The weak being right, and the strong wrong.

Look through the earth in every age,
At the world's memory, History's page:

What is the lesson there we read ?
What proud Ambition's constant meed ?
E'en where successful, what his boast ?
What all his profit ? what his cost ?
Alas ! his flourish of an hour
Is gone, with all his wealth and power !
While all the murders that he's done
Are waiting for him, every one,
Till the great reckoning day shall come.

Sesostris, on the Egyptian throne,
Conquering the world, as far as known,
Wading through tears and groans and blood :
Say, was it for his country's good ?
Alas ! in one short generation
They almost ceased to be a nation ;
While he, no power to kill being left,
Himself, of his own life bereft.

The Babylonian king the next :
What vaunting pride ! what vain pretext !
His word all nations must obey,
And all must to him tribute pay ;
His kingdom's end came on so fast,
That one man saw it, first and last !

The next the Mede and Persian line :
Raised, Cyrus, by no hand but thine ;
Its mighty power by thee begun,
Was sunk to nothing by thy son !

Next Alexander, meteor-like,
Starts up at once, the world to fright ;
And, as a meteor, scarcely seen
Till gone, as though he'd never been.
And but for widespread desolation,
We'd neither known him or his nation.

Next count the Cæsars, in their day,
Holding o'er all the world the sway ;
And while they're shedding seas of blood,
Doing, by far, more harm than good.

And still in History's page we trace,
Their followers, though a smaller race,
That ruled the world with crimson hand,
And scattered misery o'er the land.
And the conclusion is most true :
If all Ambition's bloody crew
Had timely in their birth been slain,
'Twould to the world have been a gain.

'Tis also true, in every age,
Heaven did a war against them wage.
And e'en the red man, truth must state,
If such his conduct, such his fate ;
And Wappanachi's conquering force
Had many nations made their foes :
The Senecas, a mighty band ;
The Onondaguas, strong in hand ;
The Oneidas, equal with the best ;
The Mohawks, not behind the rest ;
And the Cayugas, brave and bold.
Two thousand men, and scarcely told,
Did all with one accord unite,
And vowed, by every Indian rite,
That war's grim hatchet they would raise ;
And with the Wappanachi wage
A war of such fierce desperation,
That not a warrior of that nation
Should live, hereafter to proclaim
By whom was wrought their loss and shame.
Blows had been struck, and warriors slain
On either side, and captives ta'en ;

But in a general fight, as yet,
These hostile foes had never met ;
Though signs on every hand appear
To indicate that time as near,
And what would sooner bring it on
Was capturing great Conshomon.
This brave, not dreaming of the war,
Had with some others wandered far,
Some days before, to hunt for game,
And being loaded, homeward came ;
Were, by some fierce Oneidas met,
Of thrice their number, and beset
By all the din of war's alarms,
And all the force of Indian arms ;
Before, behind, and all around,
A host of cruel foes were found,
With tomahawk and glittering knife,
And clouds of arrows charged with life ;
These at the astonished foe they fly,
And full one-third they thus destroy,
Then haste with tomahawk in hand
To extirpate the little band.

But Conshomon, though in surprise
At this assault, was brave and wise ;
And tried his followers to cheer,
With voice and heart devoid of fear.

“ My friends, though at advantage ta'en,
And many of our warriors slain,
Yet, as from hence we cannot fly,
And do whate'er we will, must die,
Let each one to his tribe prove true,
And show what the Lenape can do.
These dogs, though to our one they're four,
We've beaten at such odds before.”

Then rushing on the nearest foe,
He dashed his brains out at a blow ;
Another, in a moment slain,
Was stretched beside him on the plain.
A third ! a fourth ! nay, six or seven,
Were sent by him to hell or heaven ;
And well his brethren at his side
Their arms upon their foes employed,
Till, in less time than I can say,
Above a score around them lay
That ne'er would join another fray.

The Oneidas, one and all aghast
To see their numbers thinned so fast
The fearful arm of Conshomon,
Whose blows were each a death to one,
Were just about to flee away
When stopped by haughty Tawerkai,—
A warrior known by every one,
And who had thus far led them on.

“What!” said he, “warriors, can it be
That you’re about to turn and flee
From such a handful of our foes!
How then their utmost force oppose?
Or who can bear the cutting gibes
That we must meet from our own tribes,
When, four to one, we’re forced to fly!
Who’s he that would not sooner die?
Before that shame shall reach to me,
A thousand deaths shall welcome be;
And this, the leader of their band,
I now will try with my own hand.
Strike then for fame, at honor’s call,
And one bold rush o’erwhelms them all.”

Then, with a yell of vengeful hate,
Like some grim demon charged with fate,
Fronting Conshomon's force he stood,
And vowed he drink his heart's best blood.
"Dog of a Wappanachi, come!
Tawerkai calls thee to thy doom;
Who hopes this day thy scalp shall grace
His tent, and after, all thy race
Shall meet destruction from his band,
And thus be swept from off the land."
Then at Conshomon's head he threw
His tomahawk with aim so true,
That one inch lower had it sped,
His foe'd been numbered with the dead.

Conshomon heard his sneering taunt,
And answered thus the idle vaunt:
"O, could our nation's quarrel be
Decided thus, 'twixt thee and me,
How soon thy bragging tribe should know
What 'tis to be our nation's foe!
But thou, the self-named Tawerkai,
Where is thy boasted courage, pray,

That never yet a battle fought,
Unless, at disadvantage caught,
Thy foes were nearly half destroyed,
And thou hadst four to one beside ?

“Father of all, Great Manitou !

Grant me thine aid, and grant it now :

If to thy teachings I am true,

And ever tried thy will to do,

O grant this wretched Tawerkai

May end his life and crimes to-day.”

His tomahawk then raising high,

Swift at his foe he let it fly.

Tawerkai saw the weapon come,

And stooping, shunned the threatened doom ;

For, had he boldly stood his ground,

His life that weapon sure had found ;

As 'twas, it struck one of his train,

And cleft his shaven skull in twain.

Then from his belt Conshomon drew

His knife, and at Tawerkai flew.

Tawerkai waited, nothing loth,—

The rest, scarce breathing, look on both.

All knew that on that struggle's end,
Their death or victory must depend.
And well these warriors proved their fame
That day was not an empty name.
Each with his left the other's right
Hand caught, and held with all his might,—
For each well knew that gleaming knife,
If not held fast, would take his life ;
His left foot each before him placed ;
His right on th' earth he firmly braced ;
Then pulled, and strained, and twisted round,
And strove his enemy to wound.
Long stood they thus, and firmly poised,—
Each by the other paralyzed,—
Each looked his foeman in the eye.
While thus their arms were raised on high,
Each from his eyeballs shot such fire
And hate, as showed his soul's desire :
In every glance a threatened death,—
A curse in every muttered breath.
At length Conshomion's strength of limb
Had gained the victory for him ;

For Tawerkai, o'ercome at last,
Was giving way and sinking fast ;
Conshomon then, with one vast throw,
Prostrated to the earth his foe ;
And scowling, furious o'er him lay,
But could not yet his foeman slay,
For to his arm clung Tawerkai,
And that with such a deathful gripe,
Conshomon could not use his knife.
In efforts fearful to behold,
He tugs, he tears, to loose his hold ;
Such efforts soon must end the strife,
Then farewell, Tawerkai, to life.
Th' Oneidas, seeing thus their brave,
In numbers rush his life to save.
A dozen of them stand around
With knife and tomahawk, to wound ;
But yet, so quick the changing fray,
Each fears his blow his friend may slay :
So, putting up their knives, they seize,
And sundering thus, their grip release.

Conshomon's weapon from his hands
Is snatched, and thus unarmed he stands.
Tawerkai, with recovered breath,
Preserves him for a future death ;
Commands that to their camp they hie,
Where, at the stake, their foe shall die.

The Wappanachi saw with grief
The capture of their mighty chief,—
Knowing all effort would be vain,
So many of their numbers slain,—
Although for every one they'd lost,
Full thrice that number it had cost ;
Their enemies, yet three to one,
The odds were just as they begun,
Besides the loss of Conshomon.

That chief a well-known signal gave,
That each should try his life to save,
And to their friends the tidings take
That preparation they might make
The Oneida forces to repel,—
Avenge his death ! avenge it well.
So, while th' Oneidas all intent
Are on Conshomon's capture bent,

They start, and through the woods they fly,
Pursued by many a hellish cry ;
And some, alas ! are overta'en,
And whensoever caught are slain ;
And some there are their foes escape,
And reach the camp of the Lenape.
Then, with a plaintive, wailing sound,
That teaches all the tribe around
The deaths, the sorrows, they have found,
A cry for every comrade slain,
Another for the captive ta'en,
And then a loud triumphant yell,
Which, oft repeated, serves to tell
How many of their foemen fell.
In haste the tribe *en masse* appear
From every side, the news to hear.
How different is that news received !
Some are enraged and some aggrieved.
Each warrior slain had some dear friend
That feels his loss and mourns his end ;
While others, with indignant ire,
Are calling loud for vengeance dire,

And every one to council call
The chiefs and warriors, one and all ;
And messengers without delay,
On every hand are sent away,
To call a meeting the next day
Of every Wappanachi friend ;
And, each equipped for war, attend
Next morning, ere the rising sun
A half hour of his race had run.
War Eagle then appointed scouts
To outlay on the various routes
That towards the Oneida camp might lead,
And give them warning should there need.

PART II.

Next morning, ere a glimmering ray
From Sol's bright beams had chased away
The darkness from the earth below,
The Wappanachi made a show
Of full five hundred men, as keen
For fight as e'er before were seen.

Of lofty stature, stalwart frame,
Led by their various chiefs they came ;
And as they came their place they took
Fast by that little bubbling brook,
Which, for its finny tribe long famed,
Trout Creek has by your race been named ;
And where the limpid waters meet
They stretch'd along the larger creek,
Until they almost reach'd my feet.
Then from each little band a few,
In council wise, in courage true,
For stern deliberation here
Beneath my ample shade appear ;
And taking seats upon the ground,
Await in silence most profound
The movement of some ancient sage
Whose words will all their hearts engage.
Nor will a single sound or word
From a young warrior there be heard
Till every* elder sage has done,
Or specially he's called upon ;

Then, with a modest grace, unknown
Amongst your race, he gives his own
Opinions; and his words are few,
Not ambiguous nor untrue.

At length an ancient chieftain rose,—
A terror once to all his foes;
But now, so many years had flown
Across his path, 't had bowed him down.
“Brothers, my fighting days are o'er,”
He said, “and I can fight no more;
But if to me the strength were given
That once I owned, I vow to heaven,
Before another hour were gone
I'd fly to rescue Conshomon;
Avenge our many warriors slain,
And wipe from off our name the stain
That must hereafter to us cling,
And with envenomed poison sting
Our future life, if tamely we
Allow such things as these to be.
Is there a son of all our race
Will give to the Oneida place;

Who would not yield his heart's best blood,
Than yield the freedom of the wood?
Shall the Oneida's skulking train
Exult o'er our brave warriors slain?
With us 't has ne'er been so before,—
At least for sixty years or more,—
That through the woods we might not roam
Where no Oneida dared to come;
And why they now are bolder grown,
To me, at least, it is unknown.
If the Lenape be yet our name,—
If we have not outlived our fame,
Then tell me, brethren, tell me why
The Oneida dares our tribe defy.”
He ended, and in wonder sate,
And for an answer seemed to wait.

When, by his side another, aged
As he, the warriors thus engaged:

“Well has the Turtle spoke,” said he,
“And I to all he says agree.
But 'tis not wonderful to me
That the Oneidas bolder grow,
And think our tribes to overthrow:

They long have known, as well they might,
With half our force they could not fight;
And hopeless ever to regain,
Alone, the lands from them we've ta'en,
A flying rumor says, of late
With other tribes they've linked their fate:
The Onondaguas, not a few,
Cayugas, Senecas, Mohawks, too!
These, with th' Oneidas, form a band
Resolved to drive us off the land;
Or, with th' exterminating knife,
Rob each and every one of life.
Thus rumor, what this morn I hear
Confirms its truth, it would appear.
The Mink, the subtlest of our tribe,
And swiftest too of foot beside,
Was with Conshomon when attacked,
And afterwards the Oneidas tracked
Until he saw them in their tent,
Whence messengers were quickly sent,
Who took their way west, north, and east,—
To where these tribes sojourn, at least.

And further says, he got so near
The Oneida camp, that he could hear
Some five or six, in conversation,
Pronounce our name with execration ;
And mention all those named above,
As being now upon the move.
And further, whensoever they come,
The Wappanachi meets his doom.
Conshomon, too, alive was left
Till their arrival to be kept ;
The torturing of so great a chief,
The sight of all his pain and grief,
Would spur them to the war begin
To fight, and conquering to win.
Thus have I told you what I know,
And you must tell what's best to do.
I never from a foe could fly,
And now would sooner fight and die."

He ceased ; low murmurs of applause
Went through the council, then a pause,
That for some seconds had endured,
When Ready Hand, to wars inured,

Essayed his thoughts in words to clothe,
And said: "For war I am not loth;
And almost all I have to say
Is, that at once we take our way
To the Oneida dogs, and fight
Before our enemies unite;
And if great Conshomon we'd save,—
To all our tribe how dear a brave!—
Let some quick plan be settled on,
And let us at the word begone.
No time have we for much to say,
Nor have we time for much delay;
For if we dally long, I fear
Our enemies will all be here;
Then must we at great odds contend,
And home and all that's dear defend;
Haste then and let War Eagle say
The word, and that be, march away."

He ended with impatient look,
His spirit no delay could brook,
And sate him down; while all the rest
An answer found in his own breast,—
An echo to his thoughts expressed.

War Eagle, at his call, arose
And said: "I will not now oppose
What seems to be the general voice;
Alas! to me there seems no choice
But war, grim war, or there or here;
And many reasons make it clear,
That better 'tis to attack our foes,
And with our might their force oppose.
Nor be discouraged; oft we've beat
Them with less force than here we meet.
Though half our strength we have not here,
The lacking tribes will soon appear;
Swift runners, sent to the utmost bound
Of the Lenape; 'twill soon be found
That to the Wappanachi's aid
What efforts can be, will be made.
Then with what force we have, we'll try
To save Conshomon's life, or die.
Knowing your skill, Great Serpent, you
Will with you take a chosen few,
And get as near as well you may
Our enemies, and there outlay.

Your skill at hiding well we know,
And judge how near you'll reach the foe ;
Watch all they do, and if you see
That all is quiet, quiet be ;
Our forces, with more open show,
Will, after you, approach the foe ;
And when they find us near them come,
Perhaps they'll haste Conshomon's doom.
Should this you see, with one bold push
Dash through their camp, to the captive rush,
Sever his bonds, around him stand,
And put a weapon in his hand,—
He's equal to their boldest two,
If right I judge, and so are you ;
Then give us that triumphant whoop,
You use when on your foe you stoop ;
That signal heard, on every side
Their camp attacked, keeps them employed ;
With us they'll have enough to do,
They'll have no time to think on you.
You know in this your life you risk,
But if for good you heed not this ;

Go, then ; and Manitou's great arm
Keep you and us from every harm."

He said, and turning to the rest,
The leader of each band addressed.
Encouraged them with words of praise,
And sent them off in various ways ;
Directing each one what to do,
Not how to do it,—that they knew ;
Declaring, as he urged them on,
Whatever happened, he for one
Would either teach the foes to yield,
Or leave his body on the field.

Great Serpent now is on his way
To where the Oneida forces lay ;
And all the rest have followed on
To save or die for Conshomon.

To Conshomon now let us turn,
And leave his friends his fate to mourn.
While indignation lends its fire
To spur them on with vengeful ire,
That chief, with strongest withes fast bound,
Whom forty of his foes surround,—

Enraged, so many friends lie dead,
They call for curses on his head,
As towards their camp he's captive led.
He marches on with lofty mien,
Nor fear, nor grief in him are seen.
As some stout bison on the plain
By many vultures may be slain,
Subdued by numbers, meets his death,
And scorns his foes with his last breath,
So Conshomon's defiant air
Provokes his enemies to dare
A man to slay, and bids them try
To see a Wappanachi die.
Tells them of all their warriors slain
By him, how many scalps he's ta'en.
His enemies, enraged to hear
His taunts, his gibes, his biting sneer,
Would soon have ta'en his life away
If not restrained by Tawerkai.
He bids his friends with patience wait,—
Their foe shall perish at the stake.
Then silent through the woods they passed,
And reached the Oneida camp at last;

Informed of their approach, the band
Full soon in crowds around them stand.
When the disastrous news they hear,
Which fills them all with rage and fear,
For though a victory they've won,
And brought in bonds great Conshomon,
The cost has been full dear to them,—
So many of their bravest men
Slain by a handful of their foes,
Who soon will marshal all their force,
And, breathing bloody vengeance, haste
To lay their homes and country waste.
A panic takes them: well they know
The strength and courage of their foe;
That strength, that courage tried before,
Has cost them dear in days of yore.
So great their fright, they seem to hear
Their dreaded foe approaching near,—
Of all things else thus losing sight,—
They urge an instantaneous flight.
Conshomon sees and hears them too,
And scorns them as a cowardly crew.

“Yes, fly!” he cries, “make your escape
While yet you may, from the Lenape ;
For well I know to-morrow’s sun
His race shall scarcely have begun,
Before my friends are on their way
Your cowardly treachery to repay.
Run, then, ye cowardly braggarts, run !
I hear the Wappanachi come.”

His words they hear with maddening rage,
And furious thoughts their minds engage ;
In curses loud they vent their hate,
And vow that death shall be his fate ;
Then crowding round their foe, they stand
Each with a weapon in his hand,
Yet hesitate to strike the blow,
Awed by the courage of their foe ;
Who seems, though brought to such a state,
A god ! who soars above his fate.
And they, though filled with burning ire,
Yet pause, his courage to admire ;
For not the keenest eye could see
A trembling nerve ; unmoved stood he

And viewed their direful preparation,
Apparently, with exultation ;
But soon this feeling overcome,—
Grim death had been Conshomon's doom,
When th' leaders interfered, to save
For future torture, this great brave ;
And called to meet, in one hour hence,
The chiefs, to pitch on some defence.
They knew the promptness of their foe :
Cautious and wise, but never slow.
Conshomon to a guarded tent
Was led, while they to council went.
When quite a similar scene took place
As with the Wappanachi race ;
Each one his seat in silence took,
And waited with a patient look,
Till some great leader of their band
In words should make them understand
What in their present state to do,—
For something must be done they knew.
An aged chief, that much was famed
For wisdom, and whose tribe had named

*

The Cunning Fox, then rose to speak.
Slow were his words; his voice was weak
With age; yet reverend in debate,
His powers were by his tribe held great.

“Brothers,” he said, “when in distress,
You’ve heard me oft my thoughts express;
But nothing e’er before produced
The strait to which we’re now reduced.
Our enemy, a powerful foe,
As all who hear me now well know,
We’ve often fought with heretofore,
When they had two to one or more;
Of courage true, of body stout,
Their warlike prowess none can doubt.
War Eagle, under his command,
Has thrice the number of our band;
With such a foe long to contend,
In our destruction sure must end;
And wise in us ’twere then to yield,
And leave to them the conquered field.
Our neighbors all have done the same,—
All have submitted where they came.

In detail, all the tribes around
In them a conquering foe have found ;
And waited all, still wait, in hope
The power will come with them to cope.
I thought myself the time was near ;
I think so still, and only fear
That this assault was immature,
And made ere all our plans were sure.
Four of these conquered tribes, in fact,
With us have made a firm compact ;
And had we waited some few days,
We'd seen them come by various ways,
Equipped for war, spirits elate,
Breathing of slaughter, filled with hate
Towards the foe ; joined with us then
We'd found at least two thousand men ;
With these our foe must beaten be,
Or else let death our portion be.
My fear is, ere our friends appear
The Wappanachi will be here ;
And should we have to fight alone
A force so much above our own,

Our warriors slain or overcome,
While desolation fills our home,
No mercy will to us be shown :
This what we may expect ; yet hear
Me out, nor wholly yield to fear :
Let us, whate'er we can, perform,
To turn or stem the coming storm.
Let messengers be sent around
To where the Oneida's friends are found,
To tell them of the war begun,
That to our aid they quickly come,
Or by delay they'll seal our doom.
Swift runners some will reach to-night,
And long before to-morrow's light,
Some warriors will be on the way
To join us in the coming fray,
And as our runners reach the rest
A martial flame will fill each breast,
And as they hear they'll swiftly fly
To conquer with us, or to die.
Our plan will be, our foes to stay
By every possible delay.

You have what I advise," said he,
"Which, if approved, quick let it be.
In promptness, safety lies for all ;
Delay, and death will reach us all."

He ceased, the rest in silence wait,
And ponder o'er their coming fate.
When War Hawk, an Oneida chief,
These words thereafter spoke in brief.

"What Cunning Fox so well declared,
Was by each one that heard him shared.
Each one agrees with what he says,
And spurns indignant all delays,
For what he says is strictly true :
Our forces match'd with their's are few.
A thousand men in force they count,
While scarce three hundred's our amount.
Again, they're more inured to war
Than any of our warriors are ;
For with some of our neighbors round
At war they've constantly been found ;
And with superior numbers, they
Have thus far always gained the day,

Until intoxicated quite
With victory, they think their might
Will beat whate'er beneath the sun
Against their tribe as foes may come.
I mention not these things through fear,
But that our view of them be clear.
The indignation of our foes
We must with all our force oppose.
Our dangers shrink if them we face ;
All other courses bring disgrace.
To Cunning Fox's words attend,
And some swift runners let us send
To summon each Oneida friend,
Our wives and children send away
Northward, to where the Mohawks lay.
Then to the Lenapes' whereabouts
We'll send some half a dozen scouts
To watch our enemies, and see
Their acts, and what their numbers be.
Meanwhile bethink you, in our tent,
To us by the Great Spirit sent,
A Wappanachi prisoner lies,
And by our sentence lives or dies.

What say ye, brethren, shall be done
With him ? His name is Conshomon ;
A name we all have need to know :
Perhaps, our tribe's most deadly foe.
In every action fought as yet
Our blood his tomahawk has wet.
Alas ! to think it gives me pain,
What numbers of our tribe he's slain.
Well now at last he's in our power,
And let him die, within the hour,
By all the tortures we can name,—
The knife, the brand, the stake, the flame."

He ended, and in rage sat down,
His face disfigured by a frown ;
His listeners nor by word nor look
Betrayed their feelings as he spoke ;
But when at length his words were done,
All seemed to threaten Conshomon.
They drew and raised their knives on high,
And instant torture was the cry ;
When Rattlesnake, a chief of note,
By gestures stayed each yelling throat ;

For though impatient of delay,
Each wished to hear what he would say.
He, wise in council and debate,
Cried: "Brethren, need I say I hate
The prisoner! Well you know I do,
And all the Wappanachi crew.
If all his tribe were in my power,
All, all should die within the hour.
Such joy, at present, may not be,
Yet may we hope such joy to see;
For if our allies come in strength,
We're sure to conquer them at length;
And when subdued, no mercy show,
But deal out death to every foe.
But Conshomon, curst be his name,
And covered with eternal shame!
Brothers, his life, I now declare,
At present, we had better spare;
That, when our numerous allies come,
They may be witness of his doom.
To see his woes will do them good,
And whet their appetite for blood.

Meanwhile, let him the gauntlet run
Through all our tribe ; which being done,
If to the goal he make his way,
We'll torture on the coming day."

He ceased ; the symptoms of applause
Showed Rattlesnake had gained his cause.
When Leaping Panther gave a call
That hushed the tribe to silence all ;
This warrior, in whom were joined
Agility and strength combined,
Had long been leader of the band,
By merit raised to the command.
Broad-shouldered, sinewy, and tall,
He raised his head above them all.

"Brethren," with sounding notes he cried,
"On what's been said you must decide,
And that without delay : our foe
Will soon be on our track, you know ;
When Cunning Fox his statement made,
Each felt our case was well portrayed ;
What War Hawk recommended, too,
Was well approved by me and you,

All but the prisoner's present fate,
There, I agree with Rattlesnake.
My messengers have long been gone
To urge our friendly allies on ;
Our scouts by this are on their way,
To where the Wappanachi lay,
To watch their motions, and inform
Our nation of the coming storm.
Now let our warriors arm for fight,
And all the rest prepare for flight,
And while we guard them from the foe,
Towards the Mohawks let them go ;
Thus shall we unencumbered be,
And from domestic ties be free.
Now be the prisoner Conshomon
Brought forth, that he the gauntlet run,
And, while the rest attend his fate,
The leaders in my tent will wait,
That all our plans may be matured
And general safety be secured."

Thus ceased the Leaping Panther ; then
In various groups retired the men :

The leaders to the Panther's tent
For further counsel instant went ;
A number too the camp surround
On every side, to guard the ground,
That no attempt at an escape
Be practised by the curst Lenape ;
The rest proceed, with horrid yell,
With savage joy, with purpose fell,
To where Conshomon guarded lay,
And seize him for an instant prey.
They drag him forth, and show a pole,
Some distance off, must be his goal,
Which, if he reach through all the band,
And on that pole but place his hand,
From further danger he'll be safe,
Till brought to perish at the stake.

Conshomon looks along the plain,
And views his foes with cold disdain,
Nor cares, if in the race he's slain,
For well he knew the torturing doom
That after this was sure to come ;
Yet life in him was very strong ;
For, though a brave, he still was young,

He would not, therefore, throw away
His life ; for some few hours' delay
Must bring his many friends this way ;
Then, looking on the plain, he stood,
And vowed he'd win, if win he could.
Alas ! but little chance for him,
Or any one, that race to win :
Two hundred warriors, in two rows,
With gleaming knives his way oppose ;
Full through their midst to gain the stake,
While each one tries his life to take ;
But, knowing well his power of speed,
And to their motions taking heed,
He waits a little for some chance,
That towards the goal he may advance.
That chance arrives : some distant scout
Proclaims his coming with a shout ;
Each, for a moment, turns to hear
The news that may be coming near.
Conshomon heard and marked it too,
And as he heard it off he flew.
Great Manitou ! can such things be !
What power ! what speed of foot had he !

Just like a meteor past he flew !
Passed half his foes before they knew
He'd started ! Then they try in vain
To overtake him on the plain ;
A few more bounds, outstripped the whole,
And safe he stands beside the pole.

His enemies, who scarce believed
That such a feat had been achieved,
Though each one thirsted for his blood,
Yet held their sacred compact good ;
So back they led him to his tent,
And wondering viewed him as he went,
Prepared to guard him through the night,
And left him safe till morning light.

Now night, with all her sombre train
Hath overspread both hill and plain,
And silence over all around
Doth reign in majesty profound,
And tired nature seeks its bed,
And rests in sleep its weary head.

Well might a stranger now suppose
That peace and safety here repose

Safe from the knives of bloody foes ;
But 'tis not so : beneath the sky
How many hundred warriors lie,
Vigorous in health, and, full of life,
Shall mingle in to-morrow's strife,
And ere to-morrow's set of sun,
Shall with life's cares and joys have done.

PART III.

The morn arrives ; life's busy hum
With the Oneidas has begun.
In groups they gather, every one
Except the guards of Conshomon.
These, keeping watch throughout the night,
Have been released with morning light ;
And each one to his tent addressed
His steps, to gain a little rest.
In groups the tribe employ the day,
In talking of the coming fray,
While each one with efficient care
Their instruments of war prepare.

The prisoner in his tent meanwhile
Regards with a contemptuous smile,
Whatever number of his foes
The apertures of his tent disclose ;
For, every added hour he lives,
Reviving hope his bosom gives ;
For, though he may not save his life,
Or live to see the coming strife,
Yet, when the Wappanachi come,
They'll terribly avenge his doom ;
And while he lives he still may hope,
And thoughts of an escape find scope.

Thus one-third portion of the day
By various means has passed away,
When, coming to'ards the tents, are seen
Two hundred men of warlike mien ;
These are the Mohawks' men of might,
To help the Oneidas in the fight.
These, of their friends the nearest tribe,—
The others farther off reside,—
Have come at once, at honor's call,
And soon may be expected all.

With shouts of joy the wood resounds,
Which echo from the rocks rebounds.
Some run to fetch, with willing speed,
Whate'er refreshments they may need ;
And when they've eat and drank, they tell
Whatever thus far has befall ;
That, animated by the hope,
Helped by their allies, they might cope
With their curst Wappanachi foe,
Assault and beat and overthrow.
Thus hoping, led by Tawerkai,
Some warriors the preceding day
Had met their enemies in fight,
And slain, or put them all to flight,
Except their leader, who, in bands,
Was now a prisoner in their hands,
Decreed their coming to await,
And now to perish at the stake.
Thus, while the Oneidas victory claim,
Their own sad loss they do not name ;
Nor hint, as they their foes deride,
How great the odds were on their side,

But blind the Mohawks with the thought
Their victory has been cheaply bought.

Their allies hear, and with loud cries
And bounding leaps, express their joys.
Oft have they heard his name with dread,
And o'er their ranks a terror spread ;
But now a prisoner, in their power,
They hope to see the flames devour
His very life, and glut their eyes
With tortures savages alone devise.

Now to a stake, drove in the ground,
Conshomon's led and safely bound ;
His hands behind securely tied,
All hope of life is thus destroyed ;
Yet still undauntedly he stood,
While heaps of fagots from the wood
Are piled breast-high around the stake,
And brands are brought the fire to make.
All from their chief the signal wait,
So pregnant with Conshomon's fate ;
But ere he issues his commands,
A female by the prisoner stands,

And by an ancient custom, claims
To save Conshomon from the flames,
If he'd become her husband now,
And fealty to the tribe avow.
Then turning round, she fixed her gaze
Full on the prisoner's manly face,
And seemed with all her power, to pray
His full consent without delay,
While all around him anxious wait
The fiat of a brave so great;
For, could they, as a friend, but claim
A warrior so well known to fame,
Each one was ready to confess,
His name would bring them sure success
In the great fight approaching near:
If led by him what could they fear.
Conshomon, as before was said,
Undaunted to the stake was led;
And there, surrounded by his foes,
A single glance served to disclose
The Mohawk band in all their might,
Full armed and ready for the fight.

It was not for himself he grieved,
When these fresh forces he perceived ;
'Twas for the friends he'd left at home,
That to his rescue sure would come ;
For much he feared this mighty host
Would overcome their feeble force,
Then death, from whom there's no escape,
Would crush the homes of the Lenape.
O, how he wished he could be free,
And once more with his warriors be !
How would he fight ! what fearful blows
He'd strike amongst his dastard foes !
Thus wild his thoughts tumultuous grew,
As he surveyed the bloody crew,
That roused the lion in his soul,
Which all his strength could scarce control.
But calmer thoughts at length assuage
And temper down his boiling rage ;
He knows his tribe, so well renowned
In fight, for wisdom are profound.
He trusts War Eagle's skill to know
The augmented forces of the foe ;

Nor doubts, should they in force agree
In numbers, what the result will be.
And though what efforts would be made
To rescue him would be delayed,
Yet ten times would he die ere they
Should rashly suffer in the fray.

Thus for his thoughts, when at his side
The female to her brethren cried,
In words that we before have told,
While all are waiting to behold
How they affect a brave so great,
Who holds in his own hands his fate.
For should he yield to her desire,
Burst are his bonds, quenched is the fire ;
For all feel bound to own the sway
Of old traditions, and obey.
He turns to view the female near,
Whose accents sound so sweet and clear ;
And sure the form that met his sight
Could scarce be seen without delight.
Her youthful beauty, air, and mien,
Were such as earth has seldom seen ;

Dark were her eyes, and dark her hair,
Which overspread her shoulders bare ;
Whilst every feature of her face
Some lovely cherub seemed to grace ;
And in her eyes, which on him gaze,
A thousand cupids seemed to blaze.
O'er all her form perfection grew ;
Her beauty named her Pearly Dew.
The bravest youths of all her tribe
To captivate her heart had tried ;
But all their efforts were in vain,—
Cold to them all did she remain.
But when Conshomon she beheld,
That coldness was at once expelled ;
And well his manly form excused
The feeling through her heart diffused.
His proud, majestic, powerful frame,
From Nature's choicest model came ;
His bearing bold, his dauntless eye,
Seemed all his foemen to defy.
There centred all that love requires,
And all that woman most admires.

Thus gazing in each other's eyes,
They wondering stand in sweet surprise ;
When Pearly Dew the silence broke,
And thus in silvery accents spoke :

“ Say, Conshomon, shall Pearly Dew
Become your faithful slave and true !
Say, shall my knife your bondage free,
And will you give yourself to me ?
I'll make your bed, prepare your food,—
Do all I can to do you good.
Say, will you give yourself to me,
And henceforth of my people be ? ”

Conshomon hears ; her words appear
Like softest music in his ear.
Each word, each look, a shield to charm
From death, from danger, and from harm.
But when at length her tribe she names,
His heart is filled with raging flames ;
Her charms, that moved him so before,
Are gone, and he's a man once more.
But Conshomon could not be rude
To one that meant to do him good ;

Besides, at home he'd left a wife
Dearer to him by far, than life;
And as he thinks of that fond home,
His heart with grief is overcome ;
But lest his enemies should think
Their signs of torture made him shrink,
He quelled his inward grief, and said,
" O Pearly Dew, most lovely maid,
I thank you for your good intent,
Which towards me was kindly meant ;
But yet you ask what cannot be :
No love could live 'twixt you and me ;
Another owns me for her spouse,
To whom I long have paid my vows ;
As lovely as yourself is she,
And faithful has she been to me.
'Twere base in me to take your love
To save my life, and faithless prove ;
For while I breathe, my faithful heart
Is hers, nor can you share a part."
Then turning to his foes, he cried,
" Let all your blasted arts be tried,

Your utmost torturing skill apply,
And see how the Lenape can die.
Twenty Oneidas have I slain,
Whose scalps within my tent remain ;
And were I free as heretofore,
I'd add to them another score ;
Your cursed meanness I despise,
I spit at you and your allies ;
Dogs are the Mohawks in a fray,
Th' Oneidas cowards worse than they ;
Haste then and show your hateful spite,
Your dastardy offends my sight ;
Haste ! ere my brethren you assail :
The Wappanachi 's on your trail ;
I scent them now approaching near,
To fill your coward souls with fear ;
Come then with all your spite, come on,
Death cannot frighten Conshomon."

Thus while he speaks the raging fire
That filled his foes, still rises higher.
Rushing in crowds around they stand,
And each one takes a burning brand,

Whilst from their chief is heard the cry,
“Begin your tortures—let him die!”
Just then a scout approaches near,
With all the signs of haste and fear,
And loudly shouts, “The foe is here!
I saw them as they came along,
In force I think five hundred strong.
In all the panoply of war,
And all their proud defiant air,
Disdaining cover, on they come,
And breathing slaughter every one.
Ere many minutes they’ll appear:
I scarce escaped them coming here,
Pursued by twenty of their crew,
Whilst crowds of arrows past me flew,
I kept them in the rear, until
They reached the top of yonder hill,
Which brought our camp within their view,
And checked them further to pursue;
Our other scouts I fear are ta’en
And prisoners held, perhaps are slain.”

Thus far the scout ; the warriors hear
With feelings not devoid of fear.
Their sudden impulse is to fly,
When checked by Leaping Panther's cry,
Whose voice resounds on every side,
"Warriors! and men! and braves!" he cried,
"The happy day at last is come
When the Lenape must meet his doom.
How long their tyranny we've known
Whose force was more than thrice our own,
How oft we've prayed that Manitou
Would grant us what he's given us now!
With equal forces how can we
Be stronger urged than now we be?
Our Mohawk friends, in all their might,
Have come to join us in the fight,
And well you know their utmost force
With ours will bear upon our foes.
Besides, to all it must be clear
Our other friends by this are near.
Rouse then at once, at honor's call,
And fight for life, for home, for all,

Put all you feel in every blow,
And sure I am we'll beat the foe.
United then let's bravely try
To beat them now, or bravely die."
Thus spoke the Leaping Panther; all
Who heard him on their leader call
At once to lead them on to fame,
To victory, and a glorious name.
Not one had courage to avow
His fear, but shamed to own it now.
And should we their past history trace,
We'd find them not a cowardly race.

The Panther ordered Tawerkai
With twenty men behind to stay;
And said, "While we the foe engage,
And loud you hear the battle rage,
Your utmost torturing skill employ,
And let yon vaunting prisoner die."
Then to his noted chiefs he shows
How best to overcome their foes.
And marshalling his force with speed,
He leads them forth with cautious heed,

Till, lost behind the forest green,
Their dusky forms no more were seen.

Then Tawerkai, with fierce delight,
Proceeds to show his hellish spite,
And hastes to where Conshomon stands,
And takes a firebrand in his hands ;
Then, with a loud insulting cry :
“Cursed Wappanachi, now you die !
For by my inmost hate, I vow,
Not all your tribe shall save you now.”

Vain was the boast, scarce had he spoke,
Ere with a blow his head was broke ;
Down on the ground he helpless lay.
His followers started with dismay,
And wondered how a foe so near
Could come, and in their midst appear
Unseen by them ! Whilst at his side
A dozen more were now descried
In Mohawk paint, but well they know
That paint but hid a mortal foe.
And well they knew that towering form,
Whose eyeballs shot such rage and scorn ;

Full oft in many a previous fight,
They'd seen that foe in all his might;
Whose deeds 'twere dreadful to relate,
Whose arm was like impending fate.
Each names the Wappanachi Snake,
And as they name with terror shake;
And could they now with honor fly,
They had not staid his strength to try;
But numbering twice his force, disgrace
And shameful flight they could not face;
So, with a shout that rends the air,
They one and all for fight prepare,
Rushing impetuous on their foes
With horrid yells and fearful blows.

PART IV.

But pause we now, and you shall hear
How 'twas his friends approached so near;
And at so critical a time
Their force to Conshomon they join.

'Twas said the Wappanachi chief
Had, with instructions clear, though brief,

Sent the Great Serpent on before,
With chosen warriors half a score,
While the main body followed on,
In hopes to rescue Conshomon.

The Serpent to his task applied,
And through the silent forest hied,
Till signs on every side appear

That indicate the foe as near :

Then, with a silent, stealthy pace,
Their further progress still they trace ;
At length a knoll serves them to show
Their enemies encamped below.

Here, in some bushes close at hand,
The Serpent hides his little band ;
And like the reptile of his name,
He showed how well he earned his fame.

Silent he glides along the ground,
Betrayed by neither sight nor sound,
Till from a hollow tree quite near,
His foes he could both see and hear ;
Unseen, but seeing all, he lay,
And kept o'er all a sharp survey ;

And as he's thus securely placed,
How quick his thoughts each other chased!
He sees the Mohawk bands arrive,—
Against his friends he knows to strive;
He sees the stake drove in the ground,
The wood for burning piled around;
He sees his friend brought forth and tied,
While all around his foes deride.
How hard it is these things to see!
How hard to see and silent be!
To keep from one defiant shout,—
Rush in their midst and fight it out!
But cooler thoughts came to his aid,—
He sees and hears the lovely maid
Who sought to save Conshomon's life
If he'd but take her for his wife.
Take her! Then to himself he said:
“Can he reject so fair a maid?
But an Oneida to become,
Grim death were far a better doom.”
But when Conshomon's answer came,
O, how it filled his heart with flame!

His lofty, proud, defiant tone,—
The Serpent scarce could keep his own
From bursting in loud shouts of joy,
And rushing with his friend to die ;
But prudence yet his mind restrains,
And still as death he yet remains ;
Although he sees them seize the brands,
Scarce waiting for their chief's commands :
But when the hastening scout appears,
And tidings of his friends he hears,
He knew these tidings will delay
Conshomon's fate, and hastes away
To where he'd left his friends concealed,
And all he'd seen to them revealed.
Described the Mohawk paint, and said :
“Let each one like to them be made ;
As Mohawks we shall pass unknown,
And nearer get to Conshomon.”
In haste his band his word obeyed,
And in disguise were soon arrayed ;
This done, the Serpent led them forth
A little circle towards the north ;

For he that side had wisely chose
As less incumbered by their foes.
The stake, too, where Conshomon stood,
On that side nearly reached the wood ;
And when the camp they viewed again,
The Panther had arrayed his men ;
And, having spoke to Tawerkai,
Towards the forest led the way.
The Serpent, soon as they were gone,
Sauntering, advanced to'ards Conshomon ;
Watching, his band concealed remain,
Ready to bound across the plain.
Approximation thus he gained,
And at a blow Tawerkai brained ;
One instant served to reach his friend,—
Sever his bonds, and then defend ;
Another, and his little band
With bounding leaps beside them stand.
With tomahawk and gleaming knife,
Conshomon now defends his life ;
While all, with one tremendous yell,
His safety to their friends they tell ;

Those friends well know the joyous sound,
And answering whoops are heard around.

War Eagle then cries: "Forward close,
And once more let us beat our foes;
You know the signal of the Snake,—
Conshomon saved is from the stake.
But every one that hears me knows
They're fighting now amongst their foes;
And what the odds they fight may be,
Haste, forward haste, and let us see!
And wheresoe'er you meet a foe,
Assault at once and lay him low.
Haste forward then, make no delay!
Haste, follow me; this is the way!
We strike for home and friends this day."
Then rushing headlong down the hill,
He vows his heart's best blood to spill,
Ere break the promise that he made,
Or Conshomon shall lack his aid.
His followers scarcely keep his pace,
So quickly does he cross the space
That separates him from his foes,
Who wait his forces to oppose.

As when some torrent, overfed
By heavy rains, is downward sped
In maddening fury, overthrows
Whatever may its course oppose,
Huge trees up by the roots are torn,
And mighty rocks are downward borne,
With crashing fury down they go,
And fill with terror all below :
Even so, impetuous, the Lenape
With fury such wild havoc make
Amongst their foes, who strive in vain
Their headlong fury to restrain,
Till half their numbers slain they see,
And seized with panic turn and flee.
A wild, disordered, hideous crew,
Past all their lodges still they flew :
The Wappanachi them pursue.
In vain the Leaping Panther tries
To stop their flight, in vain he cries
“ Oneidas ! Mohawks ! hear, I pray,
And give not to your foes the day.
How will you, after this, behold
Your friends, when this defeat is told ?

How will you face, for very shame,
The dire disgrace that blasts your fame?"
Vain are his efforts ; still they hear
War Eagle shouting in the rear.
They'd seen that chief in all his might
Cut down their friends,—a blasted sight ;
Nor could the Panther stay their flight.
Forgotten fame, forgotten home,
Fear ruled them all, and fear alone.

As when some lion, sorely pressed
By hunters in the wilderness,
Unwillingly retreats, yet shows
His front towards pursuing foes,
And should some one too near him come,
He'll likely meet a fearful doom ;
So did the Leaping Panther yield,
Unwilling, to his foes the field.
Twice did he turn, and at a blow
Cut down a near approaching foe ;
But 'twere in vain to longer stay,
In vain to throw his life away ;
So, cursing all, he wends his way.

To Conshomon now let us turn,
As, probably, you'd wish to learn
How sped he with his friend the Snake,
And the small band of the Lenape.
In some few lines before, we named
How arms and freedom he obtained,
And how, surrounded by their foes,
Were set on with fierce yells and blows.
Conshomon's limbs, when free, he found
Were paralyzed, from being bound ;
This intimating to the Snake,
Around him they a circle make,
Facing their foes on every side,
While one to rub his limbs applied,
And soon the circulating blood
Returned, and in full strength he stood.
Meanwhile the Serpent and his friends
On every side his life defends ;
Their foes on all sides round them stand,
With knife and tomahawk in hand,
And watching, with the keenest eye,
If some weak point they may descry.

In vain they watch ; the faithful few,
To courage and each other true,
Are watching them with eyes as keen,
And every move they make is seen.
Two of the boldest of their train
The Serpent has already slain ;
And now Conshomon, in his might,
Beside his friend stands forth to fight.
A war cry issuing from his throat,
Sounds to his foes a dreadful note ;
Then rushing on his nearest foe,
He brains him with a dreadful blow ;
Another, by the Serpent slain,
Is stretched a corpse upon the plain ;
And now begins a dreadful fight,
And words are weak to paint the sight.
What feats were by those heroes wrought,
As by each other's side they fought.
For years by friendship close allied,
How oft that friendship had been tried,
How oft their praises had been heard,
In battles fought and dangers shared.

Single, their arms were feared in fight ;
Together, tenfold was their might.
Friendship suffused through every part,
They seemed but of one mind and heart ;
And thus united, all their foes
Give way, nor longer dare oppose.
Flying at once, they yield the strife,
Or staying, yield it with their life.
And now their friends appear in sight,
Pursued by foes, in rapid flight.
To fight no longer dare they stay,
But, loudly yelling, flee away.
And little does their flight avail :
Great Conshomon is on their trail ;
Supported by his friends, his hand
Wields fearfully a dreadful brand ;
Behind, they hear his vengeful cry,
And whom he overtakes, they die.
How shall I tell what numbers more
That day besmeared the earth with gore ;
Or name the different warriors slain,
Whose bodies stiffened on the plain ?

And, had not succor been at hand,
'Tis like they'd perished from the land.
But, as with desperate speed they fly,
They meet a band approaching nigh,
Who count a thousand men of might,
Hastening to aid them in the fight.
Their allies these, whose force combined
Against their common foe had joined ;
And now, obedient to the call,
Were ready on their foes to fall.
At once their ranks their leaders form,
And wait to check the coming storm,
But War Eagle their foes descried,
And Conshomon, close at his side,
And both exert their utmost might
To check their friends, and stay the fight.
" Warriors," War Eagle cries, " attend,
And now your bold exertions end.
Enough you've done this day for fame,
And added glory to your name.
With equal force our foes we've beat,
But prudence bids us now retreat.

The safety of our friend obtained,
Whate'er we wished this morn we've gained,
Inflicted vengeance on our foes,
And taught them to respect our force ;
And had not aid from others came,
We'd quite destroyed their very name.
But now, in numbers thrice our own,
'Twere wise to turn towards our home,
Where our own friends will soon appear,
And then we'll beat them, never fear."

This said, they willingly obey,
And homeward slowly take their way.
Disdaining haste, devoid of fear,
A few choice braves bring up the rear,
And o'er the hills they disappear.
Their enemies, whose force exceeds
Their own so much, with caution heeds
Their every movement as they go,
Yet hesitate to approach their foe.
In wholesome terror of their fame,
They dread the Wappanachi name.
So, borrowing counsel from their fears
The wisest course for them, appears

In consultation now to join,
And all their future moves combine.

The Wappanachies on their way,
After a hard and well-fought day,
Some miles had travelled to'ards their homes,
When night in sable mantle comes,
And being weary with their toil,
Conclude to halt, and rest awhile.
A little simple food they take,
A few dried leaves their bed they make,
The major part to rest retire,
While some sit lounging round the fire,
And some to watch apart are set,
That foes too near them may not get.

Conshomon with his friend the Snake
This chance for conversation take,
Seated beside a little lake.

Conshomon said, "My valued friend,
I thought this day my life would end.
I thought there's no escape for me,
No power on earth can set me free.
How glad was I to see you come,
To save me from a dreadful doom.

But tell me how you got so near,
So opportunely to appear.

How shall I pay my debts to you,
To whom my life is justly due ?”

The Serpent cries, “ Conshomon, hold,
And let no more of this be told.

A steadfast friend you’ve been to me,
And twice I’ve owed my life to thee.

Say, when the female panther tore
My flesh, and would have torn me more,
Seizing me in such sort that I

Could neither fight the beast, nor fly,
’Twas you that plunged your ready knife
In her heart’s blood, and saved my life.

Again, when once entrapped by foes,
A dozen of them round me close,

Who is it then that hears my cries,
And to my rescue instant flies ?

Alone, despite the odds, you came,
Shouting aloud your dreaded name,

Which wrought such terror ’mongst our foes,
They scarcely staid to feel your blows ;

And happy do I feel to-day
That some of my great debt I pay.
But yet, believe me, when I say,
It was not my great debt to pay,
That brought me to your side to-day :
'Twas, that I'd sooner life should end,
Than lose so well-beloved a friend ;
No! 'tis that my whole heart is yours,
And yours is mine, my heart assures."
"It is!" Conshomon cried, "it is!
And oft the knowledge gives me bliss."

Thus, while communing side by side,
Each in the other feels a pride,
And many a close embrace they give,
And only in each other live.
The Serpent then describes how wrought
His safety, how their foes he sought ;
And tells, while in the hollow tree
The various things he chanced to see,
And warmly spoke of Pearly Dew,
So fair, so lovely to the view,
And said, "Were such a maid as she

But faithfully attached to me,
What bliss would then my portion be !
You know till now I've lived alone,
And 'tis because I've never known
One that could fill my heart, till she
So fair and lovely seemed to be.
And know, I scarcely thought that you
Could to your own loved wife prove true ;
The more, with her your life you save ;
Rejecting her, you find a grave.
But right, as always, have you proved,
And faithful to the wife you loved.
I doubt if I'd come off as free,
If such a choice were offered me.
But when the present war has ceased,
And I'm from public cares released,
I'll strive this lovely maid to find,
Tell her of all that's on my mind,
And pray she'll to my suit prove kind."

Long did these friends their rest delay,
Though hard the labors of the day,

Culling, well pleased, from memory's store,
The things they'd seen and felt before.
The moon had raised her silvery light,
And all around appeared in sight ;
The banks, the trees, the placid lake,
Both viewed in silence, neither spake.
When each one heard a rustling sound,
That seemed to creep along the ground.
Each, silent, watchful, lends an ear,
When these few words they list'ning hear,
Sung with a plaintive voice, yet clear.

“ O Manitou ! Great Manitou !

Give ear I pray to me.

No earthly ties are left me now,

Therefore, I come to thee.

“ My father and my brethren dear,

Of whom I was the pride,

Were slaughtered all, this day, I hear.

Long since, my mother died.

“ My friends and kindred, every one,

And all that cared for me,

Are gone, and I am left alone ;

And so, I come to thee.

“ A far-off happy land thou hast,

I've heard my mother say,

Where no dark clouds can overcast

The brightness of the day.

“ There, friend with friend again shall meet,

Nor pain or trouble know,

Securely hid in that retreat

From all that grieves below.

“ O Manitou ! pray take me there !

My heart is breaking here ;

My soul is sinking in despair,

No hopes for me appear.

“ What can a simple maiden do,

Hated by all her tribe ?

Shall each one scoff at Pearly Dew,

Shall every one deride ?

“ For, since I tried to save the youth,
 This morning, at the stake,
I have not met a single look
 That did not speak of hate.

“ But sure it scarce can be a crime,
 That noble-looking youth
To save his life, and make him mine,
 In honesty and truth.

“ A manlier form I never saw ;
 He seemed a God in might.
Stern rectitude his only law,
 His only rule, the right.

“ O ! would he take me for his slave,
 I swear by yonder moon,
No earthly thing beside I'd crave,
 I'd ask no greater boon.

“ But vain the wish ; he is not here ;
 He's gone towards his home ;

Gone to a wife, to him most dear,
And I am left alone.

“ O Manitou! my inmost heart
Is fully known to thee.
Thy favor then to me impart,
For I am come to thee.

“ O Manitou! this moment hear,
I pray thee hear to me.
I cannot tarry longer here,
So, thus I come to thee.”

Thus, sorrowful, the beauteous maid
Her griefs before her Maker laid ;
Then starting up, she took a leap,
And cast herself into the deep,
Believing death would kinder prove,
Than life with nought on earth to love.

The friends, Conshomon and the Snake,
Her sad complaint had heard her make,

And scarcely breathed, so still they stood,
Until she plunged beneath the flood.
Then bounding, with a rush, they flew
To save the life of Pearly Dew.
Dashing with powerful strokes aside
The waters, all their strength they tried,
And quickly reached the maiden's side.
Each gently took her by an arm,
And placed her safe from further harm.
Sat on the bank, the peerless maid,
With downcast looks, appeared afraid,
For Conshomon too well she knew,
And knew not what to say or do.
This act, she felt assured, he'd blame;
And this thought bowed her head with shame.
The Serpent felt he'd much to say,
But could not for his thoughts find way;
So Conshomon the silence broke,
And mildly to the maiden spoke:
 "O lovely maid! O Pearly Dew!
Is life so burdensome to you,
That you should plunge beneath the wave,

And seek in death a watery grave ?
I cannot think so fair a maid
For such an end as this was made ;
For though your kin from you are ta'en,
Much comfort must for you remain.
Remember, they are happy now,
Safe from all ill, with Manitou ;
And if for what you did to-day
To save my life, you're drove away
From your own tribe, with ours then join,
Welcomed by every friend of mine.
Each one will strive to please the maid
Who would Conshomon's life have saved,
And she, my ever faithful wife,
Will love and honor you through life.
My friends, my wife, her children, too,
Will nearly worship Pearly Dew.
Thus troops of friends on every side
Will take the place of your own tribe.
And O ! if I might only name
Another, but a stronger claim ;
'Tis that my friend, that's standing near,—

A long-tried friend to me, and dear,
Who came so quick your life to save,
And snatched you from a watery grave,—
Might win you his dear spouse to be,
And gain the heart you offered me,
How happy would he be I know ;
Already has he told me so.

This morn he saw you at my side
Offering yourself to be my bride,
And struck by your appearance, he
His inmost wish has named to me,
And said, when this grim war shall cease,
And him from public ties release,
He'd search the world for Pearly Dew,
And give himself and all to you.

And well I know were such the case,
Your heart you could not better place.

The loveliest female of our tribe
Would gladly be the Serpent's bride,
For all that's generous, good, and true,
Are his ; what say you, Pearly Dew ?”

“ Stay,” said the Serpent, “ let me speak,
Before you your decision make.

I will not of my merits tell :
These from my friends, who know me well,
You soon may learn, whate'er they be,
But badly would they sound from me.
But O, if you could see my heart,
You'd find yourself in every part.
Ne'er did I love till seeing you,
Ne'er shall I love but Pearly Dew ;
And could you give yourself to me,
How rich in all things should I be !
Whate'er I had I'd with you share,
And make your peace my constant care.
Whatever Pearly Dew might wish,
Of flying bird, or swimming fish,
Or if to venison inclined,
The Serpent one and all would find.
Her smile would be his morning light,
Her pleasure be his heart's delight.
But if my offer you decline,
Still may you with my people join.
I swear I will not be a brute,
Or trouble you with my vain suit ;

But let me, if no dearer name,
A brother's right and title claim."

With gentle accents, mild and true,
Thus spoke the Snake to Pearly Dew ;
Then anxious waited her reply,
So fraught to him with grief or joy.
To her, his voice had sounded clear,
And grateful to her listening ear.
And though for loss of friends she grieved,
She felt her heart was much relieved ;
But yet she could not realize
What stopped the tear-drops in her eyes.
She pondered o'er what both had said,
And, deeply thinking, bowed her head ;
Each stood before her in his might,
And each seemed perfect in her sight :
" Two nobler specimens of men,
Go search and find them, if you can.
But be assured, you far will go
To find their equal here below."
Thus thought the lovely maid ; and you
Must make excuse for Pearly Dew.

A woman's eye, a woman's heart,
She could not from herself depart ;
And though swift thoughts ran through her
mind,

What words to say, she could not find.

When Conshomon addressed the maid :

“Speak,” said he, “speak, be not afraid !

Whatever your decision be,

Warm friends you'll find the Snake and me.

Nor fear that we shall e'er intrude,

Or ever to yourself be rude.”

“I doubt you not,” the maid replied.

“I'd trust you both with life,” she cried ;

“But yet, I know not what to say,

So be not angry with me, pray,

If I should ask some short delay.

Meanwhile, a sister to you both,

I'll with you go, and nothing loth,

A sister's part I'll gladly do—

Brothers you'll be to Pearly Dew.

In my own tribe I've nothing left ;

Of father, brothers, friends, bereft,

And, destitute of every friend,
I hither came my life to end.
And much I think that Manitou
Will bless the act I'm doing now.
For had he wished my life to take,
He had not sent you and the Snake
To plunge beneath the silent wave,
And snatch me from a watery grave.
Come then, in innocence of heart,
With you I'm ready to depart ;
And when my thoughts have calmer grown,
Those thoughts to you I'll freely own."

Thus saying, without more delay
Towards their friends they take their way.
The moon, bright shining o'er their heads,
A glorious light around them spreads ;
When, having taken food and rest,
Towards their home their steps addressed ;
Which, nothing hindering on the way,
They reach while early was the day,
Where many friends, for miles around,
To help them in the war they found.

These formed a guard around each tent,
Whilst those to rest were homeward sent.
Conshomon, with the lovely maid,
To his own lodge his way then made,
Whom introducing to his wife,
Told what she'd done to save his life.
Then warm embraces went the round,
And Pearly Dew a welcome found.
But when she heard her husband tell
What afterwards the maid befell,
She clasped her in her arms, and cried,
"You cannot be Conshomon's bride,
But a dear sister unto me
Hereafter you shall ever be ;
And whatsoever may be mine,
Henceforth shall equally be thine.
But O, if you could love the Snake,
What a dear husband would he make !
For well 'tis known to all the tribe,
The Snake would happy make his bride ;
Faithful and generous, kind and true
To all, he must be so to you."

“Enough,” then Pearly Dew replied ;
“Urge me no more, I pray,” she cried.
“I saw the Snake, and heard his name,
When to your husband’s aid he came ;
And when I saw his mighty hand
Strike down my people with his brand,
’Twas not for them I wished for aid,
’Twas for my people’s foes I prayed ;
Compassion had my heart betrayed.
Again I saw him, on the way,
As towards your home we came to-day ;
His kind attention unto me
If not observed, blind should I be ;
Yet what you urge, though meant as kind,
I pray forego. My sorrowing mind
Must weep for friends, both kind and true,
Who always loved their Pearly Dew.
But if I rise above this blow,
Sister—you bid me call you so—
If e’er a wedded life I choose,
And he should ask, I’ll not refuse.
For though your kindness gives relief,
Yet still my heart is filled with grief.

I feel my lot is hard to bear.
Some years I've lost a mother's care ;
And now my other friends are gone,
And I am left to mourn alone.
Be not, I pray, displeas'd with me,
If my sad losses still I see."
From further speech the maid refrain'd,
And silence in the tent remain'd ;
For each one felt that Pearly Dew
Was right to sense and reason too.
They would not, therefore, tease the maid,
But for her comfort lent their aid.

Here leave we them, and turn aside
To th' allies of th' Oneida tribe,
Who, gathered round their council fire,
Are met, their future to inquire.
Some urge to carry on the war,
But more inclined to peace there are.
Another such a dreadful day
They wish to shun, if shun they may.
They dread the Wappanachi's might ;
And loth to join another fight,

In vain their boldest warriors try
Their added forces to employ
Against their foes ; not all their arts
Can drive the panic from their hearts.
Fear all their councils overthrows,
And terror magnifies their foes.
To further urge their chiefs then cease,
And join the general call for peace.
And messengers forthwith are sent
To the Lenape with this intent.
They find the Wappanachi host
Encamped, a thousand men in force,
Whose every thought is to prepare
To further prosecute the war.
Submissive to the chiefs, they state
Their mission, and their views relate.
'Twere tedious here to tell what scenes
Of hot debate, or by what means
At length, they gained what they desired,
And gladly towards their homes retired.
The Wappanachi, satisfied
With punishment so well applied,

Had promised that the war should cease,
And with them smoked the pipe of peace.

Nothing of note remains to tell,
What afterwards these tribes befell
For many years. Except that you
May wish to hear of Pearly Dew.
Some youths of the Oneida tribe
To gain her back their utmost tried.
But vain did all their efforts prove :
Not one amongst them could she love ;
But when at length her griefs subside,
The Serpent wins her for his bride.
And, through a life of many years,
Dries up the sources of her tears.
How oft beneath my shade they sat,
And filled the air with lively chat.
While Conshomon and his loved wife
Would often to the scene add life ;
And often to their wives they told
Adventures wild and exploits bold,
While pledges of their loves would stray
Around, or wildly skip and play.

And happier couples than the two,
I ne'er expect again to view.

Here ends my tale ; should you incline
Some more to hear, another time,
Come sit beneath the Hemlock Tree
Again, and listen unto me,
And many a legend, yet untold,
With pleasure, I'll to you unfold.

