

THE CHIEFTAIN'S DAUGHTER.

BY GEORGE P. MORRIS.

“EVERY part of the brief but glorious life of Pocahontas is calculated to produce a thrill of admiration, and to reflect the highest honour on her name. The most memorable event of her life is thus recorded: After a long consultation among the Indians, the fate of Captain Smith, who was the leader of the first colony in Virginia, was decided. The conclave resumed their silent gravity—two huge stones were placed near the water's edge, Smith was lashed to them, and his head was laid upon them, as a preparation for beating out his brains with war-clubs. Powhattan raised the fatal instrument, and the savage multitude, with their blood-stained weapons stood near their king, silently waiting the prisoner's last moment. But Smith was not destined thus to perish. Pocahontas, the beloved daughter of the king, rushed forward, fell upon her knees, and with tears and entreaties prayed that the victim might be spared. The royal savage rejected her suit and commanded her to leave Smith to his fate. Grown frantic at the failure of her supplications, Pocahontas threw her arms about Smith and laid her head upon his, her raven hair falling around his neck and shoulders, declaring she would perish with or save him. The Indians gasped for breath, fearing that Powhattan would slay his child for taking such a deep interest in the fate of one he considered his deadliest foe. But human nature is the same every where; the war club dropped from the monarch's hand—his brow relaxed—his heart softened, and, as he raised his brave daughter to his bosom, and kissed her forehead, he reversed his decree, and directed Smith to be set at liberty! Whether the regard of this glorious girl for Smith ever reached the feeling of love is not known. No favour was ever expected in return. 'I ask nothing of Captain Smith,' said she, in an interview she afterwards had with him in England, 'in recompense for whatever I have done, but the boon of living in his memory.'”—*Sketches of Virginia.*

I.

Upon the barren sand
 A single captive stood,
 Around him came, with bow and brand,
 The red-men of the wood.
 Like him of old, his doom he hears,
 Rock-bound on ocean's rim:—
 The chieftain's daughter knelt in tears,
 And breathed a prayer for him.

II.

Above his head in air,
 The savage war-club swung;
 The frantic girl, in wild despair,
 Her arms about him flung.
 Then shook the warriors of the shade,
 Like leaves on aspen-limb,
 Subdued by that heroic maid
 Who breathed a prayer for him.

III.

“Unbind him!” gasped the chief,
 “It is your king's decree!”
 He kissed away her tears of grief,
 And set the captive free.
 'Tis ever thus, when, in life's storm,
 Hope's star to man grows dim,
 An angel kneels in woman's form,
 And breathes a prayer for him.