

# "POCAHONTAS,"

A NEW SOUTHRON POEM

-BY-

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(The Old War Poet, "290")

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# PREFACE.

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## ORIGIN OF THE INDIAN.

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We are children of the forest,  
From a time so far away  
That our "sachems," being modest,  
Will not dare surmise nor say !  
The truth may be traced to Egypt,  
That dark but classic shore,  
When our fathers did possess it  
In the ancient days of yore.  
When a stranger came from "Hebron,"  
A bought slave of Potiphar's,  
Who wrestled with the famine  
That devoured Egypt seven years.  
He taught us a new doctrine,  
Of one true and holy God,  
Whilst Egypt had gods so many  
Men cared not how they trod.  
When began the Hebrew exodus,  
And Pharaoh's army all were lost,  
Indignation then fell upon us,  
And outward were we cast !  
Thus, travelling on from east to west,  
With no abiding home,  
The forest our only tent at night,  
Where naught but wild beasts roam ;  
But the "Great Spirit," in whom we trusted,  
Kept a guard o'er every child,

Until our weary footsteps rested  
    Upon this western wild.  
Here we found the old mound-builders  
    Fairly covered this grand domain,  
But we heeded not their numbers,  
    And we conquered in the main.  
Many, many moons have come and gone  
    Since those days so long gone past,  
But the "Red Man" feels not quite alone;  
    His old faith still holds him fast  
No ship owns he upon the sea,  
    Naught but a frail birch canoe;  
No castle save the light "tepee";  
    No ox to labor with a plough.  
Every "buck" is born a hunter,  
    To roam o'er hill and plane,  
To provide for every member  
    Their substance—fish and game.  
One "squaw" in every household,  
    And no more is ever seen,  
To mar the general peace, or scold  
    And disturb their happy mien.  
He knows he has lost dominion  
    Over all this grand domain,  
He knows the pale-face "Japhet"  
    Will let him still remain,  
For the "Great Spirit" he calls "Father,"  
    Whose kingdom knows no bounds,  
Will, in the great hereafter,  
    Provide both with hunting-grounds.

# "POCAHONTAS."

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## PART I

By Appomattox's limpid stream,  
Where roamed the Red Man free and wild,  
A thousand "moons" ere Columbus had seen  
The grand domain of the forest child,  
An old chief dwelt, most stern and brave,  
As e'er drew string on pliant bow—  
From his sure aim 'twere hard to save  
His feathered shaft from bringing low ;  
Whether deer that roamed the sylvan spot,  
Or hostile tribe, the quarry be,  
Naught escaped old "Brown Bear's" shot  
When sped his arrow swift and free !

His wigwam stood by Ettrick's falls,  
That dash and foam through the rocky glen,  
Where oft we hear the "cat-bird" calls—  
His mate in Spring, as he did then !  
On heights above, 'neath sighing pines,  
Apart, his warriors' wigwams stood,  
Whilst at their foot, in broken lines,  
Their canoes kissed the foamy flood,  
All ready for war, or foray,  
Or fishing season, close at hand,  
When silv'ry shad from deep-sea bay  
Came up to spawn in shallow sand.

Adown the stream, where meets the tide  
With Chickahominy's dark slough,  
They yearly met another tribe,  
Of brave "Pamunkeys," fishing too ;

Led by a chief of graceful mien,  
 Whose face was fair for savage mould,  
 With limbs as lithe as e'er were seen,  
 Of generous heart and impulse bold.

A cloud o'erhung old "Brown Bear's" life,  
 Which made him stern to all he saw—  
 When young, he'd lost a girlish wife,  
 Belov'd by every brave and squaw !  
 Her queenly bearing to the tribe  
 Drew forth from all a sympathy,  
 For a girl "papoose" left when she died,  
 That promised to grow up fair as she.  
 And on this babe the old Chief smiled  
 With all the pride he could bestow—  
 He had not dreamed her heart beguiled  
 By another's love, could wean her's now !  
 Just like a blossom of the dog-wood tree  
 In the early spring, her womanhood—  
 No fairer flower bloomed than she  
 In sylvan bowers of arcadian wood ;  
 And he had counted her all his own,  
 To cheer his heart as Time rolled by—  
 Every wish she sought was easy won,  
 But watched her now with a jealous eye.  
 For he saw there was one, but knew not where,  
 Her heart went forth to call its own,  
 Though he had promised this child so fair  
 As "squaw" to his adopted son !  
 And time drew nigh to settle soon  
 What for years he had longed to see—  
 Her nuptial *fete*—when the harvest moon  
 Sheds her silv'ry light 'neath the green-wood tree—  
 The time set forth by the "Medicine Man"  
 As most propitious in the yearly round,  
 When song and dance bring luck to the clan  
 From the "Great Spirit" of their hunting-ground.

An early Spring had caused to flow  
 The ice-bound founts of the mountain land,  
 And earliest flowers that bud and blow  
 Were seen to smile on every hand.

Busy as bees did the tribe appear,  
 With birch bark mending their old canoes;  
 One, new, with figure-head—a deer—  
 Had in her stern a light caboose.

It skimmed the water so smooth and light,  
 Outstripping all others in the stream,  
 Swift as a swallow in her flight—

'Twas a stately craft for their future "Queen"!

"White Fawn" had watched it day by day,  
 In progress 'neath their skilful knives,  
 And now 'twas launched on the rippling bay—  
 As a nuptial gift from the warriors' wives!  
 And the old Chief viewed from his tent apart  
 This token of love on the stream below,  
 Then he pressed the "White Fawn" to his heart,  
 Which set her bronzed cheek all aglow.

"Daughter," said he, "thy childhood's run,  
 And a solace to me those days have been;  
 Ere long shall my adopted son  
 Rule this brave tribe, and thou his queen!  
 Yon token of my brave peoples' love  
 Assures to me thy future lot;  
 Deeds such as these most truly prove  
 Thy mother's kindness not forgot!  
 For her, my dear, the squaws have given  
 This costly gift to her only child—  
 There's many an oak in the forest riven,  
 Whose scions grace the woodland wild!  
 When thou art Queen, be just and fair,  
 And let no prejudice blind thine eyes;  
 Let thy people be thy constant care,  
 In this nigh all thy happiness lies.

For a time will come, says the Medicine Man,  
 Such as happened our people ages ago—  
 When they all dwelt in an Eastern land,  
 Ere they were scattered to and fro,  
 As the autumn leaves that fall around,  
 By the Great Spirit ' of our hunting-ground."

"Father," the maiden then replied,  
 "Thou hast ever granted my least desire—  
 Together we've roamed the forest wide,  
 And sat in peace 'round our wigwam fire!  
 I have ever striven, as best I could,  
 Thy every want and wish to fill—  
 'Twas a cheerful duty for the good  
 Thou hast ever shown, and showest still;  
 Yet, list awhile to thy daughter's tale,  
 Though I fear thy anger at the start—  
 'Twere better to be in yonder vale,  
 Where mother lies, than cheat thy heart!  
 I can never love thy adopted son,  
 The young 'Bald Eagle,' though he were Chief—  
 His heart and mine can ne'er be *one*,  
 And 'White Fawn,' then, would die of grief!  
 Young 'Swift Foot' won it long ago—  
 'Twere wrong if I thy son mislead,  
 Whom I call brother, and thought him so.  
 So, father, be just, whilst thus I plead:  
 O Manitou, Manitou," the maiden cried;  
 "O darling mother, 'neath the grassy mound;  
 O happy spirits of our warrior tribe,  
 Who roam in peace your hunting-ground—  
 O send my love, as the arrow flies,  
 Or send me death in my deep despair,  
 Let the Great Spirit ' hear, in yonder skies,  
 And answer quickly a lover's prayer."

A lightning flash the Chief revealed,  
 Standing o'er her fair form kneeling there,

Whilst overhead the thunder pealed,  
     And tree-tops drifted through the air.  
 A tornado swept o'er hill and dale,  
     And wigwams scattered far and wide ;  
 The bronzed old Chief stood calm and pale  
     Beside young " Swift Foot's " destined bride !  
 Who yet still knelt, in reverence there,  
     Whilst the " Great Spirit " heard the maiden's  
     prayer.

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## PART II.

O the days, like the stream, ran swiftly by,  
     And deep was the maiden's despair ;  
 Many a crystal tear bedimmed her eye,  
 And many a lover's despondent sigh  
     Escaped from the Princess fair.

But she nerved herself when the old Chief came  
     As was wont in the evening tide,  
 And her smile and greeting was aye the same  
 When receiving from him the feathery game,  
     Which hung from a belt at his side.

Then she laid by quiver and trusty bow,  
     To prepare for their simple meal,  
 Not a trace on her features there to show,  
 As her placid face shone in the sun-set glow,  
     Of the pangs that her heart could feel.

When Night had well veiled the forest glade,  
     And obscured was the queen of night,  
 To a trysting-tree hied the forest maid,  
 Where the lovers met in the dark wood shade,  
     Far from sound or the old Chief's sight.



And there they vowed to each other a love,  
 Each as pure as the crystal gem ;  
 No cunning arts knew they by which to prove  
 What each there had pledged in that silent grove,  
 As they renewed their troth again.

And the warrior pressed her to his heart,  
 Where she nestled with tremulous thrill !  
 The stars shone down on the chieftain's crest,  
 As he stooped to give his love a caress,  
 On a cheek upturned to his will.

'Twas Nature all, in her happiest mood,  
 Ere 'twas marred by evil and sin—  
 As Adam and Eve in the garden stood,  
 So stood these lovers in that silent wood,  
 All tranquil and happy within.

'Till the night hours sped, and the morn drew on,  
 And the hill-tops were tinged in gray,  
 Did the young brave part from his lovely one,  
 And hasten her off to her "tepee" home  
 Ere "Brown Bear" might find her away.

Then quickly he strode through the brake and briar,  
 To a well-known bend in the stream,  
 For his light canoe was tethered there,  
 Beneath a growing vine of beauty rare,  
 Which formed a natural screen.

With a noiseless step, he soon reached his boat,  
 And the paddles seized once more—  
 A slight push sent the frail light barque afloat,  
 Through waving reeds that hid his secret moat,  
 And he plied for the lower shore.

When the sun had risen he was far away,  
 And had reached the broader stream,

But he rested not his strong arms to stay,  
 'Till he reached the edge of a little bay,  
 That danced in the sun's bright beam.

A flotilla lay there, concealed from view,  
 Awaiting for their Chief's return—  
 The quick look-out of the now anxious crew  
 Knew the well-known dance of his light canoe  
 As it rounded a rocky turn.

They loved their young Chief, yet to none was known  
 The venture on which he was bent ;  
 They saw him depart in his boat, alone,  
 'Till lost in distance, as the night drew on,  
 And the light of day so far spent.

Not a word spake he, as he leaped on land,  
 Where their camp-fire smouldered still—  
 Some broiled fish were soon ready to his hand,  
 Both fresh and hot from the fiery brand,  
 Which he ate with a hearty will.

Then he stretched himself on the grassy sward,  
 Where he slept well nigh all the day,  
 In sweet oblivion of sound or word,  
 From those who formed his most trusty guard  
 Or the noisy young "braves" at play.

At night he called together a council fire,  
 Where sat the aged of his tribe—  
 In curling wreaths of smoke each gray old sire  
 Listened to hear of old "Brown Bear's" ire  
 When he sought "White Fawn" for his bride.

And it was decided, when next they met,  
 As was wont in a few days more,  
 A cunning stratagem then to set  
 To catch the fair "White Fawn," as in a net,  
 And then bear her away in-shore.

But the "Great Spirit" brought the plan to naught  
 For He had heard the maiden's prayer.  
 No need for his love to be slyly caught,  
 For he had won her heart, when early sought,  
 At the fishing time last year.

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### PART III.

As the Appomattox tribe drew nigh,  
 'Twas a beautiful sight to the warrior's eye,  
 As closer it came to his view.  
 In paint and feathers old "Brown Bear" stood,  
 Directing the course through the rippling flood,  
 Of "White Fawn's" stalwart crew.

O'er a hundred paddles, all keeping time,  
 Followed their Chief in regular line,  
 To the shallowest part on shore.  
 All their canoes were hauled up side by side,  
 Beyond the reach of a Spring freshet tide,  
 As had swept them years before.

The Pamunkeys met them most friendly now,  
 And had prepared for a grand "pow-wow,"  
 In honor of the future Queen—  
 Whose beautiful face all longed to see,  
 As she emerged, full dressed, from the grand "tepee,"  
 Sparkling in the sun's bright sheen.

"Swift Foot" came forward with a graceful air,  
 And greeted his love, most welcome there,  
 Whilst his warriors ranged close by.  
 He gallantly led her toward the feast,  
 All deftly prepared for his honored guest,  
 Who blushed 'neath the glance of his eye.

Apart, "Bald Eagle" eyed them most keen,  
 To catch a stray word, or a look between  
     The fair Princess and Chief.  
 But well they knew him to be watching there,  
 With a cunning well taught him by the "Bear,"  
     So their talk was simple and brief.

Many days thus passed, and some weeks went by ;  
 Of fish they had cured an abundant supply  
     To last till "game season" in Fall.  
 Their archery showed most wonderful skill,  
 And their boats were handled more dextrous still,  
     A pleasure which delighted all.

May opened as fair as ever was seen,  
 In flowering shrubs and willows so green,  
     And the swallows returned again.  
 The blue-bird sang from the low-hanging spray,  
 And seemed to greet the young "Queen of May,"  
     In his clearest and sweetest strain.

Wild honeysuckles most deftly twined  
 Around the birch, and far upward climbed,  
     Drooped o'er, and formed a bower.  
 Up further still some wild creepers grew,  
 To catch the sunlight, or the morning's dew,  
     Whence hung the scarlet trumpet-flower.

More modest, hidden at their grassy feet,  
 The blue violets bent their heads so sweet,  
     'Midst a wealth of emerald moss—  
 Whose fragrance rare (though wild) did here combine  
 With the yellow Southern jessamine,  
     All kept green by the falling foss.

Far away beyond, both rank flags and reeds  
 Waved in the breeze over marsh and meeds,  
     Awaiting the cultured care

Of Japhet's sons, which were destined to coo,  
 To make this wilderness a future home  
 And raise God's altar there.

A boat race between the two tribes began,  
 Around the green isle, when the high tide ran,  
 For a quiver, with arrows and bow.  
 The trophy, a gift from the Queen, that she  
 Might honor the winner, whoever he be,  
 And a token of friendship bestow.

Both Chiefs led their crews, in gallant array,  
 Fast dipped their paddles in the sparkling spray,  
 'Till a round turn hid them from sight.  
 As the course was clear, and the water smooth,  
 "White Fawn" hoped to see her gallant true love  
 The first at her feet to alight.

But a dark cloud rose in the Western sky,  
 Like a funnel in shape as it drew nigh;  
 Uprooting the trees in its way.  
 It came with a roar on the struggling crews,  
 Destroying full half of their light canoes,  
 Beyond in the shore-locked bay.

Many swam to the land, their boats storm-tossed,  
 But "Brown Bear" and son together were lost,  
 And never were seen any more!  
 The cyclone had struck them in its full force,  
 And carried them down in its deadly course  
 With the ebb-tide passing the shore.

When the cloud had passed, and all was fair,  
 The "Medicine Man" found young "Swift Foot" there  
 Alone, and in deepest dismay.  
 "'Tis the 'Great Spirit' rules our land," said he,  
 "Who rides on the storm, on the land, and sea—  
 Come! take thy bride, and let us away.

“From this love union there will descend  
 A sure line of brave chieftains, to the end  
 Of the Red Man's long sojourn here—  
 For the time is now drawing on apace  
 When every warrior of our race,  
 Like the snow-flakes, shall disappear !

“I have read the bright stars, with weary eyes,  
 For many past moons—when the angry skies  
 Foretold one of the coming storm !  
 O'er yonder boist'rous and foamy sea  
 There shall come a mightier race than we,  
 Who will treat all our tribes with scorn.

“My time is out-run, my tale is now told,  
 Be wise, be strong, act the warrior bold,  
 And my last warning words well keep ;  
 For the 'Great Spirit' taught me prophecy  
 In 'signs' and past wonders, as shown to me,  
 In Night's silence, both long and deep.”

In solemn cadence spake the Indian sage,  
 Whose locks now were frosted white with age,  
 Forecasting the Indian's doom !  
 Long years before the White Man had pressed  
 His foot-print on fair Columbia's breast,  
 Now marked by the old sage's tomb.

Then they sang a solemn dirge for the braves,  
 Those who were lost beneath the stormy waves,  
 And next held a grand “council” fire.  
 The two tribes, uniting there into one,  
 Deplored the loss of old “Brown Bear” and son,  
 And chose “Swift Foot” their future sire.

And the fair “White Fawn” became “Swift Foot's”  
 bride,  
 And Queen of the great and powerful tribe  
 Which held for years so great a sway,

In their descendants, brave old "Powhatan,"  
 And "Pocahontas," called the fair White Swan,  
 That stole Rolfe's heart away.

Whose heroism is known in every land,  
 In saving the life from the old Chief's band  
 Of "Captain John Smith," condemned to die!  
 No matter what color the human skin,  
 'Tis such deeds that makes all the world akin,  
 And pleases the "Great Spirit" on high.

By the new bridge o'er Appomattox stream,  
 Where now is daily heard the "iron horse" scream,  
 Lies a boulder, or hollow stone—  
 Wherein, 'tis said, this lovely Queen did lave  
 Her handsome face in the limpid wave,  
 On her last visit here—alone!

Ere to leaving her native land awhile,  
 To grace the gay "court" in Britain's proud isle,  
 Where her beauty shone unsurpassed;  
 But her simple life, quite unused to "state,"  
 Succumbed to fashion's hours, prolonged too late,  
 And she fell a victim, at last.

To the old church-yard above Gravesend's pier,  
 To Mother Earth was borne her mournful bier  
 (Now draped with ivy, ever green).  
 Looking seaward is seen the Ocean's foam,  
 Ever restless between the forest home  
 Of Virginia's historic "Queen."

Stilled now are their voices for evermore;  
 Along the shady Appomattox shore,  
 By the "falls," as in olden time,  
 Only a few "Pamunkeys," civilized,  
 Remain on that river they idolized  
 In the days of "Auld Lang Sine."

## PART IV.

Like a beautiful gem in water set,  
 Is the fair green isle where the two tribes met,  
 In the river we now call "James" !  
 From its source in the mountains it rolls along,  
 Singing a dirge to the Indian's song,  
 That once roamed within its whole range.

Foaming o'er rocks, or murmuring through glen,  
 In serpentine form it rolls now as then,  
 From the Blue Ridge down to the sea !  
 Gathering force and depth from many a stream,  
 Whose borders are draped in a mantle of green,  
 A beautiful river is he.

Where high bluffs overhang the waters deep,  
 The loveliest vines up their facings creep,  
 And in rarest festoons they swing.  
 In meadow and marsh, far away below,  
 The briar and bamboo so thickly grow,  
 Where the mocking-bird reigns as king.

But few spots on earth, howsoever rare,  
 Can our own excel, or even compare,  
 In natural scenery—grand !  
 Whether Niagara's famed falls it be,  
 Or the wondrous vale of Yosemite,  
 Or the park in Wyoming land.

The Red Man roamed all this vast domain,  
 In various tribes, for its fish and game,  
 For ages past—to us unknown ;  
 Ere the White Man came, well intured to toil,  
 And wrested from him the generous soil,  
 This continent was all his own.



No wonder he grieves for his lost estate,  
 No wonder he trains his children to hate  
     The "pale face" that now holds the sway!  
 Whether he came from Egypt, or from Cain,  
 He never can his prestige here regain—  
     As a "nation" they've passed away.

Though his past history reach to the flood,  
 The part we know must be written in blood,  
     Since the first white settlers came.  
 When in contact with civilization,  
 War meant to him annihilation!  
     He chose it, remaining the same.

Though when chiefs and sages sat round their fire  
 In council so grave, we can but admire  
     What their orators spake in brief.  
 Brave to a fault, with an arrow and bow,  
 They fought to the death, defying their foe,  
     When led on by a skilful chief.

Naught now remains save a clump here and there  
 Of those grand old forests, in beauty rare,  
     Where the Indian's wigwam stood.  
 Nigh all their warriors have gone to rest,  
 But few remain in the far distant West—  
     All swept off, as if by a flood.

Quite unlike all the wild tribes that are known,  
 They bowed themselves not to wood or stone,  
     But revered a "Great Spirit" o'er all—  
 Who ruled over their "happy hunting-grounds,"  
 One whose voice they heard when in angry sounds  
     The storm caused the big oaks to fall.

A demon of "Evil" dwelt in the wood,  
 Not so well known as the spirit of "Good"—  
     But one God we are told had he.

The same handed down from father and son,  
 For ages whose course had already run,  
 Further adds to their mystery.

But the time will come in our next estate,  
 When all this mystery, with all this hate,  
 Our great, good Father will us teach.  
 Why Adam, the first, in the garden fell  
 Beneath the sly serpent's malignant spell—  
 A puzzle now beyond our reach.

Shall not retribution some day o'ertake  
 The sons of Japhet for the scorn and hate  
 Heaped on the Indian's head?  
 Who treated the "pale face" as man to man,  
 Giving him free access on every hand  
 To provide his own daily bread.

Let the "Great Spirit" judge, who sits on high  
 And ruleth nations with a watchful eye,  
 Marking all that is done amiss.  
 Though the white race now rules from sea to sea,  
 No wrong can escape His memory,  
 Nor can Japhet escape from this.

There's a volume of history in store,  
 Unwritten on page or Indian lore,  
 Of this Old World—we now call New,  
~~Wanted~~ and it in prints on the old sand-stone,  
 In bones of monsters that roamed here alone,  
 Hid for thousands of years from view.

There are mounds and forts within this, our land,  
 And grand cities buried under the sand,  
 Some of a pre-historic fame—  
 Relics of the past, that have long withstood  
 The crash of earthquake, or the drowning flood,  
 Long before the Indian came.

The Atlantic once rolled to the Blue Ridge—  
 We trace it in fossil's ledge after ledge,  
     In cuts made for the railway train.  
 But, more ancient still, clear to the Rockies,  
 Far a-down below our flowering prairies,  
     Now covered with golden grain,

Rolled a sea in the unknown long "gone by,"  
 Traced by the geologist's practiced eye,  
     Which may seem strange to many minds.  
 This fully proves my own theory's view,  
 And accords with the Bible, always true—  
     Geology with Truth combines.

The scientist who delves in earth's hard crust,  
 Finds treasures hid deep away in the dust,  
     That have thousands of years lain there!  
 Whales, with side paddles and long necks like swans,  
 Dragons, like to bears, with strong hooks or progs,  
     On wings thirty feet, that flew through the air

Sharks, having bone-crushers instead of teeth,  
 Of monstrous power, beyond our belief,  
     Once swam in the ancient seas!  
 Birds twelve feet high, with legs longer than man,  
 Their foot, toe to beel, a foot and a span,  
     Waded water three feet deep with ease.

On land, the mammoth "Megatherium,"  
 Also the monster (elephant) "Dinotherium,"  
     Having a coat of wool and hair);  
 The great Irish elk—and ox in Britain,  
 With hyenas in a cavern—hidden,  
     Together with the "great cave bear."

In the great Paris basin, as we dig,  
 A whole race (extinct), 'twixt the horse and pig,  
     Is found, and brought up to our view,

That lived in marshes, where herbage was green,  
 Ages before Adam came on the scene,  
 Is no less wonderful than true.

Of a more recent date, to perplex us,  
 Is found a monster steer down in Texas,  
 By a poor man digging a well.  
 A bonanza to him, better than gold,  
 Besides proving as fact the tales here told,  
 Far better than my tongue can tell.

The weight of these bones was three thousand pounds,  
 Six hundred the horns came within bounds,  
 The spine was full twenty-four feet.  
 When in flesh what a monster it was!  
 Tearing the prairies with its hoofen paws,  
 Defying all beasts it should meet.

The "Great Spirit," God, time cannot number,  
 Who was, and is, and shall be, does not slumber—  
 The Great "I am," holy and true.  
 Many changes since our world's creation  
 Can be clearly traced in its formation,  
 And this Moses probably knew.

The axe hath cleared all the forests away,  
 The rifle hath ended the Indian's sway,  
 And now the white race rules the land!  
 Shall we, like the former, leave naught behind  
 Worthy the name to bless poor human-kind,  
 Or only a print in the sand?

Remaineth for future ages to tell,  
 As the past tells us how Goliath fell  
 'Neath the boy David's sling and stone!  
 Nor shall wealth, nor power, with pride avail  
 Where fair Virtue is hid behind a veil—  
 And Liberty weepeth alone.