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THE LEGEND OF MAONA.

165

rest; that he could clearly perceive the errors of his life. Imaginative, my seeing him? It was as real as anything I ever knew!

May it be the rapport existing between us was so strong that his spirit, when freed by death from the restraint of the grosser material elements, was

able to communicate with mine! Thus Kreitzel would have explained similar phenomena. The impartation of his sentiments to me might, perhaps, be accounted for in this way; his presence, tangible as well as visible, never could be, I am positive. Can any one solve the latter problem?

THE LEGEND OF MAONA.

BY ELIZABETH OAKES SMITH.

"There was a maid,
The fairest of the Indian maids, bright-eyed,
With wealth of raven tresses, a light form,
And a gay heart. About her cabin door
The wild old woods resounded with her song,
And fairy laughter all the summer day."

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

PERSONAL beauty involves perils in no slight degree in this our age of partial civilization, and in the earlier development of the race they were of a more expressed character, often involving the very existence of a people. A beautiful woman was liable to be kidnapped by viking or freebooter, Greek or Sabine, and whole tribes rushed to arms to resent the indignity, and recover some marvelous piece of God's handiwork too precious to be lost. And so it should be, for a lovely woman is the most wonderful and exquisite thing in creation, too sacred to be so lightly esteemed as in our day, where she may be cast forth as among the vilest of all created things.

The laws of society doubtless grew up mainly from considerations of the position of woman in a community. The lawless chief of a clan had to be taught at some time that he could not appropriate the most beautiful of the sex because she pleased his fancy—that others were not blind, and that the woman would most likely have a choice of her own and a will of her own, which he would have to learn to respect or bide the consequences; hence men combined and associated themselves for mutual help and the protection of themselves or others.

The kings or chiefs of Greece agreed to protect Menelaus in the possession of the transcendently beautiful Helen, and when she was abducted by Paris of Troy they flew to arms, not only to resent a marital injury, but in accordance with the com-

pact which demanded of them such action. This species of usage which makes the epic of Homer a world-wide subject of interest must have been the growth of all peoples who had reached a similar degree of development. Even the savages of this country bound themselves by a contract similar to the ancient Greeks under similar circumstances, and which left the woman free to choose for herself the object to whom fealty should be given, the right of choice being one of the earliest assertions of woman. The story I will relate is history more than fiction, and the usages described belong entirely to the realm of fact.

Even in communities of a low grade of civilization it sometimes happens that a happy combination of the elements leads to the production of a man or a woman quite beyond the average standard of those about them, as in the case of Red Jacket, Pontiac, Osceola, and many others that might be named not only in modern, but classical records. Among women the idea of chastity allied to maternity and the family relation would seem to have been an inspiration of some gifted woman who was quite beyond the abject, servile, or sensual women who made up the majorities of her sex. Men and women had long worshiped an invisible unknown power, which we call God, before the social moralities were evolved—this second table of the law.

Maona was one of the kind to which we have hinted above. Her father was chief of the Patchogue tribe of Indians living on the south side of Long Island, on what is now known as Peconic Bay, to which he gave the name. He was an enterprising, warlike man, who chafed at the ascendancy of the Mohawks, who lived nearly two hundred miles to the north, and had, partly by

force of arms and partly by policy, succeeded in subjugating all the clans on the south side of the island. The method of doing this grew out of the natural products of the localities involved.

The natives of the Mohawk region found it difficult to procure shells for the manufacture of those exquisite belts called wampum, so essential in the ratification of treaties, and as insignia of honor. What the seal is to a treaty, and the star and garter to the knight of prowess or man of eminent service, the wampum belt was to the aboriginal chief.

On the other side, the Patchogue and other tribes of Long Island were rich in shells, but poor in the flint-stones for the manufacture of arrow-heads, and they in process of time negotiated such measures as resulted in the exchange of commodities. Shells for wampum were prepared on Long Island, and arrow-heads made on the banks of the Mohawk, and thus the symbols of peace and the necessities of war were amicably adjusted, and, accordingly, arrow-heads, or celts, are now picked up on the shores of Peconie Bay, the geology of which must be found on the banks of the Mohawk.

But the warlike tribes of the Six Nations, which included the Mohawks, finally usurped power over all less stalwart peoples, and at length exacted a tribute of wampum where originally they had made exchange of commodities. The fine bay, now known as Peconie, was every season alive with canoes that had come down the Hudson River, traversed the sound, and rested paddles among this and other tributaries, not only to collect dues, but by right of power to hunt the deer and fish in the waters which rightfully belonged to others.

Peconie felt himself powerless to resist this presumptuous intrusion, and felt himself still more aggrieved by the bold manner in which the head of the Mohawks, Ongadoc, proposed to take his daughter, Maona, to wife. Now the fame of the girl for beauty and intelligence had covered a larger space than that of Helen of Troy, and suitors of power, redoubtable warriors, subtle chiefs, and enthusiastic young braves, were not wanting to fill up the measure of her triumphs.

Maona was wise as she was lovely, and by no means ready to leave the wigwam of her father for the doubtful felicity of a new home, most especially one like Ongadoc's, who, though brave in war and

skillful in the hunt, was known to already have one wife to plant his potatoes and cook his venison. When, therefore, Peconie reported to his daughter the wishes of the Mohawk chief, she smilingly answered :

"Maona neither cooks nor plants; she would be only a burden in his wigwam. Ongadoc is too great a chief to marry into our poor tribe."

But to her mother she said: "I have many suitors. I will not marry one to bring upon my father the malice of all others. It is folly to go to war with the odds of a thousand to one. Maona can paddle her canoe where the gull finds a rock and the eagle a nest."

To which her mother replied: "When the mother of Maona became the wife of Peconie, she chose a great chief in the presence of brave men, who, when they saw her hold her hand to him, covered their faces and went forth never to return. Maona shall be no withered stick on her father's threshold, nor shall she go unbidden to the Great Spirit."

"It shall content me," whispered the girl, who well knew that her mother was peerless among the women of her tribe, and who thus had brought about the right claimed by the beautiful to do according to her own will in the matter of her marriage.

CHAPTER II.

"With look like patient Job's, eschewing evil;
With motions graceful as a bird in air,
Thou art, in sooth, the veriest devil
That e'er clutched fingers in a captive's hair."

HALLECK.

WHEN Peconie returned from the chase with Ongadoc, he spoke to him as of a thing of little moment about his daughter, saying :

"Maona is like a bird fond of the old nest."

"The eagle ejects the young who loiter too long under the branch. Maona is wise as she is beautiful; she must wed a great chief, and in time sit at the council-fire with the wise women of the tribes."

But Peconie saw that the brow of Ongadoc lowered with rage, though his voice was soft.

From Montauk to Peconie the waters of the south side of Long Island were gay with the canoes of warriors and hunters and fishers, for it was the hunting-moon, and the island was full of game, and the waters with fish of every kind, and

celebrated then as now for the excellence of its oysters. More than this, the word had gone forth that the beauty of Peconie would publicly take to herself an husband, and many a young brave who had dared to lift his eyes so high would at least show that he could estimate the beautiful though it might be beyond his reach.

It was, as I have shown, the custom of the aborigines, under the peculiar stress of great beauty combined with intelligence, making it difficult to dispose of a woman by ordinary means, to summon together all who aspired to her hand, and it was her province to decide among the claimants, and this involved a solemn compact on the part of all others to protect the favored lover in the possession of his rights.

A bower of branches ornamented with wild-flowers and ripened berries was built under a lofty pine-tree, which still may be seen on the south side of the main road of West Patchogue. A lake slumbered amid the overhanging woods, where disported the speckled trout, while the grape hung in heavy festoons from tree to tree, and presented alcoves of rare loveliness to the eye. The ground heaved in swells of verdure, and the work of the beaver had created a natural esplanade under the tall pine, and given a slight fall to the stream that made its way from the lake to the waters of the bay.

Here, under the ancient pines, was enacted a rite akin to that of the Greeks at the choice of Helen. A screen of leaves concealed the entrance of the cabin which shielded the beautiful Maona. In a semicircle reclined the lovers, each in his finest mantle of skins and his decorations of eagle-feather, plume, or shield, at once indicating the rank he might rightfully claim.

A gentle wind whispered in the pines; the sun glinted the bright waters of the lake; the boom of the ocean beyond the reef of sand which skirts the bay was a deep monotone blending with the splash of the little stream below, and the occasional out-gush of the thrush with its mellow notes; all else was a breathless silence. Many minutes elapsed, and there was no stir from the bower upon which all eyes were turned. Peconie sat like a statue of stone, while a smile of triumph played about the lips of his wife. Ongadoc had seated himself like the humblest brave to bide the feat of beauty.

Slowly the leaves were turned aside, and the softened sunlight encircled the beautiful head of

Maona like a halo of glory, while a murmur of admiration arose from the lips of the assembled women. A moment she stood with downcast eyes, her two hands lightly clasped, and falling below her girdle; then she walked onward where sat the assembled chiefs. She made the circle in utter silence, and no smile upon her lips. Returning she lifted her eyes smilingly, and extended her hand to the no less beautiful than herself, Syonet, chief of a neighboring tribe, who with dignity arose and placed himself at her side, at which every suitor, veiling his face in his robe, slowly arose and turned himself seaward. Ongadoc had, like the rest, veiled his face, but it was to hide the rage that distorted his features, and he did not leave the place where he was seated.

After a brief space, Syonet approached Peconie and laid a beautiful belt of wampum at his feet, then he turned to the stream where his canoe swung beneath the bank, followed by the lovely maiden who had selected him above all others to be the head of the wigwam.

The group of discomfited suitors stood together on the bank of the stream, and it would seem that the delay of Ongadoc to leave the circle with the rest had not been unobserved.

Suddenly, with a fierce, angry yell, the Mohawk chief sprang to his feet, and rushing forward, seized Maona in his arms, and with the fleetness of the desert stag cleared the distance between the bower and the sea, where his canoe was guarded by his trusty followers. Now it was that the fell passions of the untutored men burst forth in all their savage ferocity. The presence of Ongadoc had aroused the suspicious hatred of his rivals, and it was now seen that the lovers of Maona had each one come to the tryst armed with bow and arrow hidden beneath his robe.

No sooner did the chief bearing Maona in his arms appear upon a reach of meadow which lay between him and his canoe, than arrow after arrow cut the intervening space and lodged in the shoulders of the fugitive. Fleet feet were upon his track, for now all the violent passions of the uncultured men were roused to intensity, and even those who would have acquiesced in the choice of the maiden no sooner saw this decision violently cast aside, than with a wild cry for vengeance they lost all sense of the hazards to which she was herself exposed by the flight of their deadly weapons. More than this, the sight of

her in the arms of the abductor served to inflame even a rage against the innocent cause.

At length Ongadoc was seen to reel and sink to the earth; in a moment he was up and rapidly approaching his canoe, while his trusty followers in great numbers hastened to his aid. A moment more and he fell heavily to the earth, while the fierce cries of friend and foe filled the air.

Peconie drew his mantle about his face and leaned against the old pine in silence. Slowly Syonet approached, bearing the beautiful Maona in his arms, and laid her dead at the feet of the father, and veiling his face he seated himself by her side; one by one the suitors approached, and again the circle was made in front of the flowery bower; but there was now gloom and silence where had been expectation, if not hope. Ongadoc was dead, and there were loud cries for vengeance, restrained even by savage men in this hour of sorrow, for rarely had the wil-

derness furnished such beauty, intelligence, and grace.

A cry of wailing arose from the women bearing the luckless maiden within the bower which had so recently been the witness of her triumph, and many a wildwood nymph scattered blossoms around her, and in simple rhythmic cadence told how the soul of nature pined at the extinction of such loveliness.

They made her grave under the pine-tree of which I have spoken, overlooking the lake, and there for many years was seen a noble chief coming at intervals when there was no moon in the sky, who, wrapped in feathery mantle, seated himself by the little mound that marked the last resting-place of Maona. It was Syonet, who, having roused the tribes to avenge her death, had seen them overpowered and exterminated by numbers, and he, the last of his tribe, died at length on the grave of Maona.

LATE TO CHURCH.

BY MAY W. MILLS.

ALONG the road, on either side,
The elder-boughs are budding,
The meadow lands a rosy tide
Of clover bloom is flooding;
The sunny landscape is so fair,
So sweet the blossom-scented air,
That when I went to church to-day
I could but choose the longest way.

Loud sang the bobolinks, and round
The milk-weed flowers the bees were humming.
I sauntered on, but soon I found
Behind me there was some one coming.
I did not turn my head to see,
And yet I knew who followed me
Before Tom called me, "Kittie! stay,
And let me share with you the way."

We did not mind our steps grew slow,
Or notice when the bell stopped ringing,
Or think of being late, but lo!
When we had reached the church, the singing

Was over and the prayer was done,
The sermon fairly was begun!
Should we go in, should we stay out,
Press boldly on, or turn about?

Tom led the way, and up the aisle
I followed—all around were staring—
And here and there I caught a smile;
I tried to think I was not caring.
And yet I blushed, I know, and showed
A face that like a poppy glowed,
For every one seemed saying, "Kate,
We all well know why you're so late!"

Another Sunday, come what will,
I mean to be at church in season;
But to regret this morning still
I trust I never shall have reason;
For should I wear a wedding-dress
A year from now, perhaps you'll guess
What Tom had said to me the day
We walked to church the longest way.