

(Written for Baldwin's Monthly.)

MRS. HENRY R. SCHOOLCRAFT.

ELIZABETH OAKES SMITH.

Among the celebrities of New York, twenty years ago, was the Schoolcraft family. Every one familiar with American literature is aware how much our writers of Indian legends are indebted to Henry R. Schoolcraft for the material of their works. He had passed thirty years upon the frontier, living with the Western tribes in the most familiar manner, as United States Agent. He had studied, as no one else in the country has done, their habits, their mental characteristics, their language and mythology. His Indian vocabulary is a mine of suggestive thought, and his *Algie Researches* one of the most interesting books of the kind ever written. In the production of this work he was largely indebted to his wife, whose Indian blood, and wild wood imagination revelled in the poetic side of the Indian character.

Mr. Schoolcraft was born in Guilderlead, Albany County, N. Y., March 28, 1793. He must have been a precocious youth, having entered college at fifteen. When I knew him he was a large, heavy man, fond of talking upon his frontier experiences, and relating Indian legends. I had read with delight the *Algie Researches*, and the first stanzas of my poem, "The Acorn," embodied the idea of the Puckwudjies, or Little Vanishers, as gathered from his work. In a note also, I had enlarged upon the idea, tracing the word Puck, supposed to be Shakespearean, to the Algonquin language. Julian C. Verplank, in the notes to his edition of Shakespeare, so unfortunately lost in the great fire which subsequently destroyed the printing-house of the Harpers, had been so struck with this view that he had embodied it into his notes of "The Midsummer Night's Dream." It was thus, from a certain sympathy of thought, some kind friends brought Mr. Schoolcraft to see me. He had published several numbers of a magazine, illustrative of Indian thought and life, and desired me to furnish him an article. I did so, writing "A Legend of Ronkonkomon Lake, Long Island; or, The Origin of Evil." This attracted some considerable notice at the time, and Mr. Schoolcraft declared it "truly Indian," with much more, in an appreciative vein; but what was much to me, it brought me the acquaintance and friendship of that remarkable woman, his wife.

Henry R. Schoolcraft and his brother George had married two sisters, granddaughters of Sir William Johnston, the grandmother being Molly Brant, the sister of Thayendenagea, so celebrated in the annals of our war for Independence. I had the impression that these two sisters were daughters of Sir William and Molly Brant, but I am told in this I must be mistaken. Mrs. Schoolcraft always spoke of her mother as a Mohawk Queen, and spoke of her with admiration. The sisters were educated in France, and were quite accomplished. Mrs. Henry R. spoke the Algonquin, French and English languages fluently, and read Latin, Greek and Hebrew. Both played the piano, and conversed with vivacity and taste. They dressed much in the prevailing fashion, varied with admirable skill, just enough to present a *souppon* of the Indian wild wood, if by nothing more than a belt of wampum. Their complexions were a clear olive, with a slight touch of color, only when animated. The hair was purple black, very abundant and very straight, growing quite low upon a broad, smooth forehead. Mrs. Henry was rather above the ordinary height, straight and slender, with a graceful, easy motion, and, like her people, with very small feet and hands. Her mouth was flexible, of a good width, and very soft and sweet in expression, and with white even teeth when she smiled, was a most attractive feature. I have observed the softness of the mouth is characteristic of the aborigines of our country as described, or rather hinted at, by Hallowell in "Red Jacket:"

"Who will believe that, with a smile whose blessing
Would, like the Patriarch's, soothe a dying hour,
With voice as low, as gentle and caressing,
As e'er won maiden's lip in moonlit bower;

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

It would not be possible to rightly describe Mrs. Schoolcraft's eyes. They were deep-set, of a dark gray, deepening in emotion to black, the lid large and clear; but there was, when at rest, a look of intense sadness, and when she broke the silence after this expression, her voice was a musical sigh, a something like an echo dying out, which was very touching. I have noticed this cadence in more than one Indian; but never in the negro, whatever his status.

Speaking of the beautiful softness of the mouth pertaining to the Indian, reminds me that it is exactly that which art has given to the Apollo, and the general contour must be such, as is evident from the exclamation of the artist West on first seeing the Apollo Belvedere, he being quite moved out of his Quaker propriety by uttering, "My God! how like a Mohawk Chief." No amount of culture takes this away, or imparts that anxious compression of the lips that follows civilization. I noticed this in Dr. Wilson, an educated Indian of Cattaraugus, and I noticed too, that these men and women, like persons of genius, who go back in a way to the aboriginal, delight in whatever carries them home to the Indian life.

There was a group of distinguished persons at my house one evening, among whom was Dr. Wilson, the Schoolcrafts, and others; all of whom talked with animation, but I observed the Doctor seemed ill at ease in our ordinary drawing-room chairs, his bulky figure quite protruding over them, and testing their strength fearfully. One of the guests queried whether cigars would be objectionable. Of course not, but the Doctor was provided with a pipe, which I begged him to consider a calumet, and smoke with an eye to comfort. He at once settled his head down into his collar, much as Horace Greeley used to do preparatory to a sleep in church, and began to pour out volumes of smoke. I am sure he thought me a very obliging white "Squaw," for indulging him in his native luxury. We had some recitations after this, and I called upon the Doctor for a war-whoop. Our guests seconded the call, and the Doctor's eyes flashed an old primeval fire, such as had inspired the tribes to battle for long centuries. He implied that it was too much, that it would frighten us all, but I had heard it in a large hall from Catlin, who was as lithe and springy as a leopard, and had hardly calculated upon its effect from a heavier physique. He threw back his shoulders, sprang forward, and beginning low, rose to a fearful yell—so deep that it made me think of a lion's roar—so intense that the windows rattled. These Indians are apt to go back to their original wildness, and I could not but suspect, that a few repetitions of the war-whoop might suggest to him the propriety of taking our scalps.

Some twenty years ago a young English girl fell desperately in love with one of these handsome, educated savages, and married him; but he eventually developed a playful fancy of seizing her by the scalp-lock and waking her from a sound sleep with a war-whoop, which so preyed upon her nerves that she escaped from him and made her way back to her friends. These marriages of different races rarely ever prove fortunate. At the time Lord Morpeth (Earl of Carlisle) was traveling in this country Mrs. Schoolcraft came one morning to invite me to join the party on the western tour. How grave, and yet how breezy and earnest were her importunities, so unlike our hackneyed conventional!

"Go with us," she said, "and you shall be paddled down the Sant St. Marie, in the handsomest canoe, and by the handsomest Indian of the West;" and again she reiterated, "You have an Indian soul, all that an Indian exults in would speak to your mind, you should go to the sources of the Mississippi, which my husband was the first to discover, and we would talk over those rare old mythologies, so little known and appreciated by white people. You will delight to hear the language of the Indian spoken in the midst of the waterfalls and mountains; listen!" she raised her eyes and with wonderful pathos, and solemn depth of intonation, uttered

what caused cold chills to run down my back and my breath to stop with awe.

"What was it?" I whispered.

"Our Lord's Prayer in Algonquin."

How handsome—how inspired she looked! How much would women gain could they so far forget civilized training as to be thoroughly true and in earnest.

Mrs. Schoolcraft delighted to recite the legends of her people, and would playfully, sometimes, when her listener was fully absorbed, go off into Algonquin, which had a most musical sound. She was, unquestionably, nearly, if not quite, the author of the *Algie Researches*.

WHAT I KNOW ABOUT HORSES.

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

THE following letter of Mr. Beecher's, reciting a few of his experiences in the horse market, will be relished by many another victim not so well calculated to make the best of it as he is:—[ED.]

MY DEAR MR. BONNER—You desire to inspire your readers with an interest in science, and in all matters of natural history, and no doubt you will regard the horse as worthy of all attention. I have found out many things about horses that you will not find in any of the books, and which throw great light on their excellences.

1. We all know that the horse is one of the noblest animals, and that in intelligence and kindly disposition he excels. But, that he had the power to inspire all who deal with him with his own moral qualities, I did not know until, on various occasions, I conversed with horse-dealers. In every case I find them to be frank, truthful, honest, and simple-minded as children. One of them who sold me a pair of horses, assuring me that, while he feared that there were some who misrepresented about horses, yet he never did; for, he wanted his customers to have confidence in him, and to be so satisfied with the horses which he furnished that they would always come to him again, etc., etc. I bought a pair of him. One fell dead after a drive of forty miles in eight hours, and the other soon lamed in the fore-feet, and never recovered.

Another man brought me a pair which he raised expressly for me; i. e. he assured me that he had said a hundred times to his wife, while bringing up these colts, how proud he should be if only he could sell a pair of horses to me. He also came down in price, for moral reasons. He asked two thousand, but he would take sixteen hundred dollars; for he confidentially said, I have wanted to contribute in some way to benevolent objects, and he felt that I could employ that four hundred that he took off, far more wisely than he could!

"What is the value of a few dollars to me compared with my good name?" said one. "Others may swindle their customers, but I don't do business in that way." In short, after a considerable acquaintance with trainers, buyers, and sellers, and upon their solemn and confidential assurances, I must say that the care of horses makes men very honest and truthful. The fact is interesting, and may open a new chapter in biology.

2. There is a prevalent mistake as to the age which a horse may attain. There have undoubtedly been instances in which horses have lived over ten years, but, in all my inquiries, I have seldom found horses over eight. I see them for sale at five, at six, at seven years old, etc., but generally they are seven the coming Spring, or one of them seven, and the other eight, if a pair is in question. I do not know, if I should advertise for a pair of horses twelve years old, whether a pair could be found in all the market stables in New York where "gentlemen's horses" are on sale! There is something puzzling in all this.

3. I have watched the advertisements, principally in the *Herald*, of sale stables, and of private stables whose owners were about going to Europe; and I am surprised and delighted to see how many horses exist without a fault. They go like lightning, and yet are so gentle that a child can drive them. They do not bite or kick. They are warranted sound, kind, and stylish. Every day I see for sale the finest horses ever sold in New York.

To this must be added the disclosure made by those advertisers of the speed which has been attained by skillful breeding and good training. Whereas, twenty-five years ago, a horse was rare that could trot inside of four minutes, now there are very few horses that cannot. Indeed, three minutes is now considered as rather dull; well enough for a funeral, but not entitling a horse to much praise. Any number of nags can now be had that trot inside of two-thirty, and pairs of horses abound on every hand that can show two-fifty.

What wonderful changes are wrought. If this goes on, no horse will rank high that cannot trot inside of two minutes, and some future historian will deride the days past when it was thought wonderful for a Dexter to show 2:16!

I have also found that horses in general are very spirited, but entirely well-broken; that they all have courage and endurance; that they are natural roadsters, and that they can go off from eight to ten miles an hour, and keep it up all day.

It seems very strange to me, therefore, to hear so many persons as I do complaining of the difficulty of obtaining good horses!