

INDIAN LOVEMAKING AND MARRIAGE.

The ruling passion among the aborigines of the forest, the Red Men, our true Americans, was as strong and was held as sacred as it was among their more enlightened neighbors, the white people. The Indians had peculiar customs in relation to forming marriage alliances and the duties of husband and wife, and their offspring until they arrived at the age where they were supposed to be able to take care of themselves. Different tribes had different customs, but the difference was only in details. When a boy had shown himself to be competent to take care of a wife, he decided upon the girl he wanted and prepared himself for the interesting lovemaking ordeal through which, according to custom, he had to pass before he could claim the young squaw of his choice as his own. In most of the tribes his manner of making love was peculiar from the "courting" of the white people away down here at the beginning of the twentieth century. Dressing himself in the best manner possible and decorating

himself in the grandest style imaginable he sat around for hours in perfect silence about the tent of the girl he sought to capture. Although he was as mum as an oyster, uttering not a word; his conduct was perfectly well understood by the party of the second part. After a few visits the girl's family and friends held a consultation, and if everything was lovely and the goose honked high, the girl indicated her willingness by twisting the corner of her shawl and casting coquettish glances in the direction of her lover. That night he hid near the entrance of her tent. Of course all the young Indians and girl squaws knew all about it, but he was supposed to be unseen by anyone. Presently the girl, having robed herself, rushed out of the tent, but was soon captured by her lover. If she resisted he immediately left her, but if she wilted or swooned and gave up without a struggle, he carried her to the neighboring spot and began his courtship in earnest. They were shy at first and did little more than stand and look at each other, and finally separated, each going their way home. On subsequent evenings when they met they remained standing, but if they discovered that they were really in love, they locked themselves in each other's arms and—well, you must imagine the rest! It would be hardly fair to penetrate further into the privacy of these lovers' performances, and we leave them on the bank of the beautiful lake with the quiet moonlight peeping through the leaves of the spreading forest trees to revel in the ecstatic bliss of youthful courtship known only to those who have realized it by experience.

Come away and leave them to themselves.
How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank,
Here will we sit and let the sounds of music creep in our ears;
Soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.

At last the young brave coaxed his mother to visit the girl's father, who stipulated the number of ponies her son was to bring for his daughter. If the price was considered too high, the match was declared off if not, the lover tied the ponies to the door of the wigwam. On the following morning, if the ponies were still there he knew his suit had been rejected; if not, he took the girl, without further ceremony, to his wigwam, which he had prepared for her. After that they were considered married and she was his property and his servant, to do all the cooking, drudgery, taking care of the ponies, raising the corn and potatoes, etc. He had the right to whip her and beat her, sell her, or even kill her as he pleased, but, although he had these rights, they were seldom if ever exercised. As has been the case ever since the dawn of the world's history, woman was the slave of the household, or the wigwam, and so long as she did her part reasonably well the couple lived in peace and harmony. Although separations took place occasionally, such a thing, as divorce in a legal way was never known.

Chief Po-ka-gon's Love Story.

The love story of Simon Pokagon, written by himself, taken from his romantic story, published in book form, entitled "Queen of the Woods," being an account of his courtship and marriage with the beloved Lonidaw, who became his wife, is probably the most remarkable literary production ever produced by a full-blooded Indian. Simon Pokagon was born at what

was known as Pokagon village, on the Pottawattomie lands in Indiana, in 1830. He was sent to Notre Dame University, where he became a remarkable student and graduated with honors. He wrote many articles on the Pottawattomies and the Indian race in general, and also gave lectures. He died on January 25, 1899, near Hartford, Mich.

A short time before his death he wrote the story of his courtship and marriage to Lonidaw, a fair Pottawattomie maiden. The great charm of the story lies in the simplicity with which the lover pours forth the passion and the grief of his heart. It is the beautiful legend of the princely Hiawatha and the fair Minnehaha, or Laughing Water, in real Indian life.

Pokagon begins his story by telling how he chanced to meet the shy and winsome Lonidaw and how he sought her favor, doubting and hoping in turn, until she graciously smiled on him and said "Ae," which is "Yes." Then he was forced to be absent from her for several months.

The night before his return he slept in the woods and listened to the Great Spirit Manitou give the tradition of the origin of the trailing arbutus. Pokagon conclude; the vision: "When he had done the 'old man slept and a maiden passed her hand above his head; he began to grow small, streams of water began to flow from his mouth and very soon he was a small mass upon the ground, his clothing turned to withered leaves. The maiden moved away through the woods and over the plain and all the birds sang to her and wherever she stepped, and nowhere else, grows our tribal flower, the trailing arbutus.

And thus the lover with a lover's enthusiasm paints the scene in the morning when he continued his journey to Lonidaw's wigwam: "The sun, though yet unseen, had painted the eastern sky a brilliant red. High in the air were multitudes of wild pigeons, sweeping the heavens as far as the eye could reach and moving in a line, like columns of trained soldiers, southward to procure their morning meal. All the twigs and branches of the grand old forest were thickly fringed with needled frost, forming a silvery screen through which the sunshine was sprinkled down, shedding the glory in the tree tops on the ground, filling my youthful soul with love for the divine. Stillness reigned almost supreme along the trail I passed, only broken now and then by the woodpecker beating his chiseled bill into some decaying wood in search of food, or some partridge on a prostrate tree sounding his rolling drum to entertain his lady love of early spring. I paused and listened to his oft repeated drumbeats of love, poured forth in military style, and to myself I said; 'Happy lover, no doubts disturb thy trusting heart, while fear and sore distrust are warring in my soul. ***

"I reached the wigwam of my bride to be. All was quiet as the morning air. My fluttering heart was all the sound I heard, that, like a, bird in a cage, beat the bars that held it fast. While standing before the door a strange feeling held me there in bonds which none but a doubtful lover can ever know and which no language can express.

"While there I stood Lonidaw opened wide the door, bidding me come in. The chilling gloom of yesterday had left no impress on her face, but instead the fondest smiles of maidenhood were plainly written there. I thought perhaps the deer in the night returned, but soon I learned that he had not. Then well I knew those smiles so sweet were all for me alone.

"With mutual hearts we clasped each other round and sealed again the

marriage vow with concert kisses, imparting a thrill of joy so pure that only they who truly love can ever feel and fully understand."

The wedding followed, a description of which is charmingly given by the bridegroom himself. "When the moon of flowers and bloom came," he writes, "and mating birds were moving northward and wild flowers were blooming and the trees were putting on their robes of green I took the hand of my dear beloved Lonidaw and she became my bride. No wedding cards were passed around, no gifts were made, no bells were rung, no feast was given, no priest declared us one. We only pledged on sincere faith before her mother and the king of heaven. Our hope, our joys were one. Hand in hand along an ancient trail we took our course until we reached a land of game. Here we paused and like two mated birds that search and find a place to build their, nest of mud and straw so we, beside an inland lake where towering woods embrowned its shore and flags, rushes and wild rice in plenty could be found, built our wigwam home of poles and bark. There oft at dawn and eventide we fished from out our birch canoe, and that she would have more success than I of times I would bait well her hook and let my own go bare, then wonder why she caught more fish than I."

"Oft returning from the chase, weary and tired of carrying game, I'd follow down the trail upon a narrow neck of land that ran into the open shore, and I never failed to see Lonidaw's erect and slender form on hasty run. No swan ever faster swam or more elegantly appeared than she when bending to the oars, pushing her birch canoe across the swelling bosom of the lake. As she would approach me while waiting on the shore I always hailed her, 'queen of the woods.' On our return across the lake she would cling to the oars and have me steer. I always felt her image in my heart and loved to see it in the lake and oft would ask her if her feelings were akin to mine. Her only answer was an approving glance and downcast smile. Thus happy in each other's love we floated down life's stream, all unprepared for cataracts and rocks along the shore.

"Two years flew quickly by when Olomdaw, our first child, was born. The night he came no man of skill or neighbors gathered at our home. Alone in the presence of the Great Spirit and myself Lonidaw went down to the gateway of death's dark valley and brought forth our darling boy, together with a father's and mother's crown, one for her and one for me. As I beheld in the first morning light our cherished infant nestling on her breast and saw Lonidaw smile in triumph as she gazed on me my love, respect and sympathy for her were all a sea without a shore.

" All about our woodland home wild birds and flowers rejoiced with us, and we were richly blessed, feeling the dear boy was sent of heaven to our wigwam as a seal to our union, that it might not be broken; for if there is one holy tie of love more sacred than the rest it is that a true-hearted husband feels for his dear wife when their first child is born."

Nearly three years of pleasant life for Pokagon and Lonidaw passed on and a second child, a daughter, which was christened Hazeleye, was born. These two little papooses grew up together amidst the lakes and forests, the pride of their father and mother. At 12 years old the son, Olomdaw, went away to school to be gone three years. When he returned at the end of that time the curse of the red man was upon him the drink habit. It was not

long until he passed away. The father writes: "I do not wish to bleed my heart or sadden yours; suffice to say, as darkness succeeds the meteor's glare, so his young life went out and left us in the, midnight of despair. Dear little Hazeleye was left us then, that sweet rosebud just opening into maidenhood, the very image of her mother. She was our only hope, and as our hearts were bound up in hers we consoled ourselves with the assurance that she was far removed from the alluring serpent born of the white man.

"But such was not the case. One day while Hazeleye was fishing in the lake two drunken fishermen rowed their boat with such recklessness they ran into her bark canoe, which was crushed and overturned, throwing her into the water. Lonidaw, standing on the shore, saw the crash and heard her scream. She wildly cried, 'Oh, save my child!' and in her frenzy plunged into the flood and swam desperately as none but a mother could to save her drowning child. The faithful dog, returning from the hunt, rushed into the lake and reached the wrecked canoe just at the time Lonidaw did. But Hazeleye had gone to the bottom never to rise again. The mother, strangling, struggling, sank beneath the waves, and, rising, she caught hold of the dog and he swam with her to the shore."

Pokagon, the husband and father, was just returning from the hunt when he saw her lying on the beach of the lake, apparently dead. He clasped her in his arms and carried her to their wigwam, and on mats and rushes she had lately made he laid her down. She began to gasp and then to breathe, and then amid sighs and groans, sobs and tears, she told him the sad story of their child. After a lapse of several weeks, which seemed stretched into years as he sat beside his dying wife, he heard a sigh. Slower, slower she breathed until she ceased. The sun had set.

" And then," he said, "I pressed my hand close to her side until I felt the last pulsation of her heart. Then, oh, then, I knew she was dead."

Then came the funeral, of which he wrote: "On her funeral day no relatives in sable robes appeared. No hearse with ostrich feathers crowned bore her form away. But native hunters of the wild, who oft had shared the bounties of her home, dug her grave at early morn; then came the fragrant woodland flowers and on her casket they laid them. They came with blankets, pure white, about them and with moccasins of deer hide upon their feet, while with uncovered heads and muffled tread, slowly they bore her from the door away. A Christian teacher and I next to them came while in our rear truehearted neighbors followed. Tenderly they carried her along the wandering trail, under lofty archways of giant trees, until they reached her last resting place, which she in life had chosen. And there among the evergreen trees upon a beautiful headland, near the shore of our forest lake in sight of the waters that covered our dear Hazeleye, we gathered, and the; sadly assigned her to the grave, dropping therein modest forest flowers which she in life oft wore and much admired, and as we listened in silent prayer to the solemn words, 'Earth to earth and dust to dust,' a little dusky maiden of our band, who lately had been taught the Savior's love and knew Lonidaw well, all unbidden sang :

Asleep in Jesus, blessed sleep,
From which none ever wake to weep,
A calm and undisturbed repose,
Unbroken by the last of foes.

"The closing words were scarcely sung, when from the shore across the lake in childlike tenderness, the song was again sung, and again and again repeated from shore to shore, weaker and weaker until it died away, mere whisper in our ears.

"In tears of gratitude and with a heart of prayers, I blessed the little maiden there. One by one the friends forsook the spot, leaving me there alone to commune with the spirit of my departed Lonidaw. Kneeling beside her grave I breathed a silent prayer to the Great Spirit that she might be received into the arms of Hazeleye in his kingdom beyond. Then I arose with a broken heart and sorrowfully wended my way homeward."

Thus ended the romance and the chief of the Pottawattomies seldom smiled thereafter. Since his death five years ago the tribe has been without a real chief. There are so few left that the government agents easily manage their affairs.