Northwest Ohio Quarterly

Volume 11

Issue 3

[*Concluded from the April issue.*]

[26]

MOONLIGHT AT MACKINAC

THE Queen of night,
In splendor bright,
Rides through a Heaven of liquid light;
Whilst many a far
And golden star,
Twinkles and hides
Behind her car.

Glorious Queen!
Thy radiant beam
Sheds o'er the landscape a mellow gleam
Soothing thy power,
Pensive the hour,
While stillness reigns
In this lonely tower.

No ripples break
The mirror'd lake;
The coming bark scarce leaves a wake;
The cheering song
Floating along,
In changing tones,
Soft, full and strong.

[27]

The dashing oar
Near the shore,
Brings voy'geurs to their home once more,
From wilds far west;
From toil they rest,
And now shall pleasure
Have a zest.—
They drop the oar,
Spring on the shore,
Merrily passing the word
'Bon-jour.'

MARY.

SOUVENIR OF THE LAKES

[28]

SONG.

Thou hast woo'd me with pledges,
A princess might wear;
Thou hast offer'd rich jewels
To wreathe in my hair:
Ah! deck with thy jewels,
The halls of the sea;
Thy gold and thy purple—
They are not for me.
But give me love's myrtle,
And ribbon of blue;
And I'll go to the bridal,
At vespers with you.

Thou has told of the glory
That waited thy bride;
Thy mansion of splendor,
Thy lineage of pride:
Ah! show to the high-born
Thy palace of glee;
Thy courts and thy titles—
They are not for me.
But give me a cottage,
A warm heart and true;
And I'll go to the bridal
At vespers with you.

HARP OF THE ISLE.

[29]

OZHAWONGEEZHICK.

The following are the circumstances which occasioned the subsequent lines:—

Ozhawongeezhick, was a Chippewa Chief, who with others of his tribe, had assembled for the purpose of merriment: drinking rather too freely of the intoxicating bowl, they became quarrelsome, and the carousal eventuated in the death of the above named Indian. The one who gave the stab which terminated the existence of his comrade, as soon as he saw what he had done, fled, and before the dawn of day was beyond the reach of his pursuers.

The deceased is represented, as being of a mild and peaceful disposition, though brave and undaunted in war. His residence was at some distant part of Lake Superior, and he had been, as was his custom, to Drummond's Island, a British post, where presents were annually distributed by that government to the Indians. His widow, with her infant son, daily visited the grave of her murdered husband, during the remainder of her stay at the place, where she would sit and weep for hours, with her face resting on her bosom, and then go away sorrowful.

Lament of an Indian Woman at the Grave of Her Murdered Husband

[30]

Ozhawongeezhick! wake!
The day in beauty dawns;
The sun is smiling,
Thy boy is whiling,
Oh, wake! my husband! wake!

Ah! thou art cold and dead!
Thine eye hath lost its fire;
The cruel foe
That laid thee low,
To distant wilds has fled.

'Twas not the white man's knife
That did the murd'rous deed:
It was thy friend
And comrade's hand
That took away thy life.

No more on yon blue lake
Shall we with pleasure glide,
Nor shall I weave,
The wild flower wreathe,
Thy manly brow to deck.

Brave was my Chieftain's heart!
High-raised his battle-axe:
When foemen dar'd,
No foe he fear'd,
But drew his well-aim'd dart. [31]

Why not 'mongst warriors yet,
And in the council found?
Ere thy days length,
Had gained their strength,
Thou'rt mould'ring and forgot.

Wait! 'till thy boy has grown
And learn'd to trim his bow—
Thro' wild and heath
T' atone thy death,
With vengeance fierce he'll roam.

Whilst I, with saddened grief,
Will visit this lone spot,
Which now contains
The loved remains
Of my brave, slaughter'd Chief.

Mary.

Souvenir of the Lakes

[32] ### A Wyandot Tradition.

Towards the close of the seventeenth century, a body of Indians composed of the Wyandots, (or as they were then called, the Saustauraytsee) and Seneca tribes, inhabited the borders of Lake Ontario. The present Wyandot and Senecas are the remains of this community, and of the cause of their separation, and of the relentless hostilities by which it was succeeded, the following details are given in the traditionary history of the Wyandots.

A Wyandot girl, whose name for the sake of distinction shall be Oonyaystee, and in whom appeared united a rare combination of moral attractions, and of extraordinary personal beauty, had for her suitors nearly all the young men of her tribe. As insensible however as beautiful, the attentions of her lovers were productive of no favorable effect; for though none were rejected, yet neither was any one distinguished by her partiality. This unaccountable apathy became in time a subject not only of general but of common interest to the young Wyandots. Where single efforts had failed, combinations might succeed, and a council composed of those interested in the issue of these many and impor-
[33] tunate applications for her favor, was accordingly held to devise some plan for the solution of the mystery. At this, when these amorists had severally conceded, each, that he could boast of no indication of preference shown by Oonyaystee to himself, upon which he found a reasonable hope of ultimately succeeding, it was finally determined that their claims should be withdrawn in favor of the War-Chief of their lodge. This expedient was adopted, not so much for the purpose of advancing the interests of another to the prejudice of their own, as to avoid the humiliating alternative of yielding the object of so much competition to some more fortunate rival not connected with their band.

It may be necessary here to remark, that nearly all the suitors belonged to one lodge, and that each of the lodges was a large oblong building, capable of containing twenty or thirty families, the domestic arrangements of which were regulated by a War-Chief, acknowledged as the head of that particular subordinate band.

Many objections to the task imposed on him by this proposition, were interposed by the Chief, the principal of which were, the great disparity of age, and the utter futility of any further attempt upon the affections of one so obdurate of heart. The first was obviated by some well applied commendations of his person, and the second yielded to the suggestion, that women were often capricious, and sometimes inexplicable beings, whose inclinations were not always influenced by considerations the most obvious, or resolvable to reasons the most natural.

[34] The Chief then painted and arrayed himself, bestowing some little additional adornment upon his person, to aid him in this species of warfare, with which he was not altogether so familiar, as with that in which he had acquired his reputation; his practice having been confined rather to the use of stone-headed arrows than love darts, and his dexterity in the management of hearts, displayed rather in making bloody excisions

than tender impressions. Before he left the lodge, his retainers pledged themselves, that if the prosecution of this adventure should impose upon their Chief the necessity of performing any feat to render him better worthy of acceptance of Oonyaystee, they would aid him in its accomplishment, and sustain him against its consequences, to the last extremity. It was reserved for so adventurous a spirit, that he should be as successful in love, as he had hitherto been resistless in war.

After a courtship of a few days he proposed himself, and was conditionally accepted—but the nature of this condition, further than that it was indispensable, Oonyaystee refused to disclose, until he should have given her the strongest assurance that it should be complied with. After some hesitation, and a consultation with the lovers who urged him to give the promise, he declared himself ready to accept the terms of the compact. Under her direction he then pledged the word of a warrior, that neither peril to person nor sacrifice of affection, should ever prevail with him to desist, imprecating the vengeance of Hanmendeezhoo, and the persecution of Daishshooooroono, upon his head, if he failed to prosecute to the uttermost the enterprise, if its accomplishment [35] were only possible.

She told him to bring her the scalp of a Seneca Chief, whom she designated, who, for some reason she chose not to reveal, was the object of her hatred.

The Wyandot saw too late that he was committed. He besought her to reflect that this man was his bosom friend—that they had eaten and drank and grown up together—and how heavy it would make his heart to think that his friend had perished by his hand. He remonstrated with her on the cruelty of such a requisition—on the infamy of such an outrage of confidence, and the execration which would forever pursue the author of an action so accursed. She told him either to redeem his pledge or consent to be proclaimed for a lying dog, whose promises were unworthy even to be heard—and then left him.

An hour had hardly elapsed before the infatuated Wyandot had blackened his face, entered the Seneca village—tomahawked and scalped his friend—and as he rushed out of the lodge, shouted the scalp-whoop. In the darkness of the night his person could not be distinguished, and he was challenged by a Seneca, to whom he gave his name, purpose, and a defiance, and then continued his flight. But before it had terminated, the long, mournful scalp-whoop of the Senecas was resounding through the Wyandot village, and the Chief had hardly joined in the furious conflict, that ensued between the avengers of his murdered victim and his own retainers, before he paid with his life the forfeit of his treachery.

After a deadly and sustained combat for three days and nights, [36] with alternate success, the Wyandots were compelled to retire, deserting their village and abandoning their families to such mercy as might be granted by an infuriated enemy. Those who were left, sunk under the tomahawk and scalping knife—the village was devastated, and the miserable author of this bloody tragedy herself perished, amid this scene of indiscriminate slaughter and desolation.

Souvenir of the Lakes

A Wyandot Tradition

This war is said to have continued for a period of more than thirty years, in which time the Wyandots had been forced backwards as far as Lakes Huron and Michigan. Here they made an obstinate stand, from which all the efforts of their relentless enemies to dislodge them were ineffectual. Their inveterate hatred of each other was fostered by the war parties of the respective tribes, whose vindictive feelings led them to hunt and destroy each other, like so many beasts of the forest. These resulted generally in favor of the Wyandots, who, inspirited by these partial successes, prepared for more active operations.—Three encounters took place on the same day, two being had on Lake Michigan, and one on Lake Erie, and which, from their savage and exterminating character, closed this long and merciless contest. It is somewhat remarkable, as no other tradition makes mention of an Indian battle upon water, that one of these, said to have occurred on Lake Erie, between Long Point and Fort Talbot, was fought in canoes. Of this the following detail is given.

[37] A large body of Wyandots, accompanied by two Ottawas, left Lake Huron in birch canoes on a war excursion into the country of the Senecas, who had settled at this time near the head of the Niagara River. They put ashore at Long Point to cook, when one of the Ottawas and a Wyandot were sent out as spies to reconnoitre. They had proceeded but a short distance from the camp, when they met two Senecas, who had been dispatched by their party for the like purpose, and from whom they instantly fled. The Ottawa, finding his pursuers gaining upon him, hid himself in the branches of a spruce tree, where he remained till the Senecas had passed. The Wyandot, fleeter of foot, succeeded in reaching his camp, and gave the alarm, when the whole body embarked and pushed out into the Lake. In another moment a party of Senecas was discovered turning the nearest point of land, in wooden canoes. Immediately the war-whoops were shouted, and the hostile parties began to chaunt their respective death songs. As they slowly approached each other, the Wyandots struck a fire, and prepared their gum and bark to repair any damage which might occur to the canoes. The battle was fought with bows and arrows, and after a furious and obstinate contest of some hours, in which the carnage was dreadful, and the canoes were beginning to fill with blood, water and mangled bodies, the Senecas began to give away. The encouraged Wyandots fought with redoubled ardor, driving the Senecas to the shore, where the conflict was renewed with unabated fury. The Wyandots were victorious, and few of the [38] surviving Senecas escaped, to tell the story of their defeat. One of the prisoners, a boy, was spared, and adopted by the nation. Two Wyandots are now living who profess to have seen him when very far advanced in years.

The two other attacks, to which allusion has been made as occurring on the borders of Lake Michigan, were not more fortunate in their issue. The Senecas were repulsed with great slaughter.

Thus, say the Wyandots, originated this long, bloody, and disastrous war—and thus it terminated, after proving nearly the ruin of our nation.

TO A YOUNG LADY
UNDER SEVERE SICKNESS AND DEPRESSION

WHEN the storm is highest,
Let thy fear be lightest,
When the danger's nighest,
Let thy hope be brightest.
Thus reason's voice shall soothe our rugged clime,
And hope prevail o'er dangers and o'er time.

When thy pulse is burning,
And thy frame is weakest,
Think of health returning,
When little thou reckest.
Thus hope's sweet voice shall lull thy rising pains,
And pleasure smile—for hope with pleasure reigns.

If in death thou seemeth,
Let no fear possess thee,
Think of Who redeemeth,
And shall surely bless thee.
Thus faith and reason, every thought sublime,
And hope, the charmer, triumphs over time.

H. R. S.

[THE END]

THE AUTHORSHIP OF
"A VISIT TO THE CAVE IN PUT-IN-BAY ISLAND"

THE last sketch in the previous issue of the *Bulletin*, reprinted with only a conjecture as to its authorship, may now be definitely assigned to Captain Henry Whiting. M. M. Quaife, Secretary of the Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library, called my attention to Estwick Evans' *Pedestrious Tour of Four Thousand Miles Through the Western States and Territories* (1819), which describes a visit to Put-in-Bay in the early spring of 1818, as establishing the authorship of the item in question, "A Visit to the Cave in Put-in-Bay Island." On this particular expedition the boon companion of Evans and co-explorer of South Bass Island was Captain W., whom he characterizes as a "gentleman of a scientific and polished mind." Reference earlier in the account included Captain W. in the company and party of General Macomb, who had a home at Malden. Whiting, who was made a captain in 1817, was aid to General Macomb and was the only Captain W. of the Detroit area of known literary leanings. There can be little doubt, therefore, that the Captain W. referred to in Evans' account was Captain Henry Whiting, later Major (1834) Lieutenant Colonel, and finally Brigadier General Whiting of the United States army.

Since it is fairly conclusive that the reference in Evans' book is to Captain Henry Whiting, the chief matter to be established is that the

two accounts, that of Evans and that here reprinted, are sufficiently identical and unusual to have been written only by fellow travelers on the same trip, or, in short, that the *Souvenir* sketch could have been written only by Evans' companion. This I believe to be true. In both there is mention of the honored dead and concern over neglected graves. Both versions date the trip in early spring, an unseasonable period for the movement of lake boats, and both indicated that the captain headed for Put-in-Bay to secure ballast. In both there is a gale which delays advance for several days. In both there is reference to old clothes and to the diving or jumping of one of the two comrades into the cave pond. Such resemblances are too close to be accidental. The writer of the anoymous account, moreover, refers to one of his traveling companions as having "come to see Detroit, in the depths of winter," and as "now returning, laden with memoranda, which, after much dilating, afterwards served to fill a small volume." This is an obvious reference to Evans. Only one slight discrepancy appears: Evans refers to two visitors, whereas Whiting adverts to more; but this is not significant when we call to mind the difference in length of the two accounts and the obvious simplification which Evans' notes must have undergone.

One other consideration remains. What opportunity was there for Whiting's story to get into Schoolcraft's hands? This is easily explained on the basis of their personal correspondence. Whiting had a letter from Schoolcraft in January, 1831, the month of the *Souvenir of the Lakes.* In the same year Schoolcraft supplied notes for Whiting's *Sanillac,* a metrical romance of the Indians. In 1839 Schoolcraft dedicated to (then) Lieutenant Whiting his *Algic Researches* as an expression of "literary sympathy and personal friendship," and these tales and legends of the Indians were reviewed by Whiting that same year. Thus a selection from Whiting in an 1831 gift-book was a contribution from a friend and from the Detroit author second in reputation to Schoolcraft himself.

A further word as to Whiting's literary activity may be adduced. In 1823 Whiting published *Ontwa,* a long poem on the pattern of *Lady of the Lake.* It is a five-part tale, opening in true Chateaubriand fashion, of a tramp with an Indian cicerone, during which the tragedy of the Erie Indians in 1653 is poured out by the last surviving mourner of the race. Indebtedness to Scott here manifested by diction, irregularity of stanza, and lyrical interlude, is also evident in the structure and context of *Sanillac,* published by Whiting nine years later. It is a tale of Indian life without any white characters and unique, therefore, among metrical romances. The story itself is an Indian version of the "test of love," for the Wyandot suitor of the "Maid of the Isle" must return from the Iroquois camp with enemy club and scalp before the consent of the father will be granted. The purpose of the author, however, is not so much to tell the story of the war between the Iroquois and the Wyandots as to furnish illustrations of the manners and customs of Indian tribes. In 1834 Whiting was one of the authors of *Discourses before the Historical Society of Michigan,* which reprinted his 1832 address as well as other annual speeches from 1830 to 1833 by Cass, Schoolcraft, and Biddle. During the twenties Whiting contributed several articles to the *North*

American Review on the military affairs of the United States, and in succeeding decades added reviews and articles on national defense, the Seminole war, and the Northern lakes. In 1844 he edited *George Washington's Revolutionary Orders* and to Spark's *American Biography* contributed a life of Zebulon M. Pike. Thus, though the sketch of the visit to Put-in-Bay was written early in Whiting's career, probably four years before his first published volume, its author continued for some years to devote himself to literary enterprises as well as to fulfill his duties as an army officer.

G. Harrison Orians.

EARLY TRAVEL IN THE BLACK SWAMP

An Extract from "The Wolf Hunter" by Otway Curry

The route from the village of Lower Sandusky [Fremont] to the City of Detroit traverses, for the first thirty miles, the most dreary and difficult part of that desolate region, familiarly known in Ohio and Michigan by the appellation of "The Black Swamp."

A remarkably dense growth of small timber and underbrush, arising out of the black and stagnant water which overspreads the whole surface of the ground, together with the unstable and miry nature of the soil, presented obstacles to the operations of our armies, during the late war between Great Britain and the United States, by which the "Giant Swamp" will be rendered memorable while the records of that conflict are extant.

Long subsequent to that period, my evil genius prompted me to attempt the passage of this miniature Tartarus, in company with a quondam officer of the United States army. The nondescript "craft" selected for the hazardous enterprise, was called a *coach*, and was most plentifully bedaubed with mud and commendation; the former in consequence of sundry unseemly flounderings in the swamp—the latter in consequence of its *supercargo* having acquired a certain tact, whilome of some importance to a certain class of politicians in our land.

Our speculations concerning the genus, pedigree, and date of the "Grampus"—which we found to be the name of our migratory penitentiary—were cut short by a notification from "owner and driver" "to get on board"; and in a few minutes we were off, spattering and plunging through the mire at the rate of half a knot per hour. Such unwonted rapidity of movement, however, was of very brief continuance. Jolts and jostlings innumerable were succeeded by something very like the lurch of a Mississippi "ark" in distress, after which the ungainly *phiz* of Owner and Driver was thrust deliberately through a kind of port hole in front, for the purpose of announcing a "dead set". "Encourage your horses and make a vigorous effort", said my companion.

In an instant the "flexors" of Mr. Owner's dexter arm were doing duty valorously, and the flight of his voice had overtopped the very utmost note of the gamut. But sinewy yerks and shuts *in alt* were alike ineffectual—so, furling his whiplash, he surlily remarked that "No mortal team could budge it from the spot, with *such a load*."

The hint was easily understood. It was necessary to *debark* in order to afford the Grampus an opportunity of *righting* again. There was no alternative—so out we plunged, into mud and water over boot-top, bearing each a cargo of baggage about equal in magnitude to the burden of Bunyan's pilgrim. Here we were obliged to locate and philosophize during the long hour which Owner consumed in effecting the rescue of his appropriately yclept mud-craft. The black swamp frowned around us in every direction—the rain fell in torrents, and, uniting with the unbroken sheet of water beneath, recalled most forcibly to our minds, the account of the deluge of olden time, as originally written by the Hebrew historian, and *revised and corrected* by Rafinesque.

Owner and Driver at last succeeded in extricating his vehicle, into which we were re-admitted—clothes and baggage dripping with mire and water—and again got under way. We had proceeded in this way a few miles when my companion espied, through the port hole, a temporary resting place, consisting of a floor formed of the trunks of trees, with a covering of branches and bark; and a thick coating of mortar, on the extremity of the floor, designed as a substitute for a fireplace. It had evidently been constructed by some benighted "movers," and, contrasted with the dreariness of the scenery around, wore quite an air of comfort.

"Supercargo, ahoy!—shall we not touch at this port and kindle a few branches, in order to dry and refit our clothes and baggage?"

"Not exactly, sir; unless you intend to *do* old Robinson Crusoe, about as large as life."

"Beseech you, good Mr. Super!—we shall detain you but an hour at farthest."

"You may detain yourselves *till satisfaction,* you'll not stop *me* an instant."

Mr. Owner drove on without further ceremony, cracking his whip, jingling his harness, and pretending not to hear our expostulations.

Captain R. drew forth his note book with the intention of writing a comparison between our adventure and the voyage of ancient Jonah, and he made a very clever beginning when two points of difference occurred, so palpable as to induce him to forego the execution of his project: in the first place, while the debarkation effected in the case of his excellency the whale was a *bona fide, terra firma* transaction, that of the Grampus was no whit to be distinguished from the downright *submorass* expulsion; and secondly, the machinations from the interior of the Grampus were, figuratively speaking, in duetto—whereas in the case of the whale is was, unquestionably, Jonah *solus*. . . .

A further detail of our operations whilst we were tossed about in the dominions of Owner and Driver would be monotonous. Suffice it to say that, at the end of the second day, were arrived on the bank of the Maumee, or Miami of the Lake. Captain R. here announced his determination to accomplish the remainder of his trip in a small schooner which lay at the foot of the rapids, and which was expected to sail next morning for Detroit and Pontiac.

From the *Hesperian,* June, 1838, pp. 128, 129.