

**THE AUTHOR'S POCKET-VOLUME
EDITION; LONGFELLOW'S
POETICAL WORKS, VOLUME
III. THE SONG OF HIAWATHA**

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The Author's Pocket-Volume Edition; Longfellow's Poetical Works, Volume III. The Song of Hiawatha by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

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HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

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LONGFELLOW'S
POETICAL WORKS

VOLUME III.

THE SONG OF HIAWATHA

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GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS
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1878



THE SONG OF HIAWATHA.

THIS Indian Edda—if I may so call it—is founded on a tradition prevalent among the North American Indians, of a personage of miraculous birth, who was sent among them to clear their rivers, forests, and fishing-grounds, and to teach them the arts of peace. He was known among different tribes by the several names of Michabou, Chisbo, Manabozo, Tascnyawagon, and Hiawatha. Mr. Schoolcraft gives an account of him in his *Algic Researches*, Vol. I. p. 171; and in his *History, Condition, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States*, Part III. p. 214, may be found the Iroquois form of the tradition, derived from the verbal recitations of an Onondaga chief.

Into this old tradition I have woven other curious Indian legends, drawn chiefly from the various and valuable writings of Mr. Schoolcraft, to whom the literary world is greatly indebted for his indefatigable zeal in rescuing from oblivion so much of the legendary lore of the Indians.

The scene of the poem is among the Ojibways on the southern shore of Lake Superior, in the region between the Pictured Rocks and the Grand Sable.

SHOULD you ask me, whence these stories?

Whence these legends and traditions,
With the odours of the forest,
With the dew and damp of meadows,
With the curling smoke of wigwams,
With the rushing of great rivers,
With their frequent repetitions,
And their wild reverberations,
As of thunder in the mountains?

I should answer, I should tell you,
"From the forests and the prairies,
From the great lakes of the Northland,
From the land of the Ojibways,
From the land of the Dakotas,
From the mountains, moors, and fenlands,
Where the heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,
Feeds among the reeds and rushes.
I repeat them as I heard them
From the lips of Nawadaha,
The musician, the sweet singer."

Should you ask where Nawadaha
Found these songs, so wild and wayward,
Found these legends and traditions,
I should answer, I should tell you,
"In the birds'-nests of the forests,
In the lodges of the beaver,

In the hoof-prints of the hison,
In the eyrie of the eagle !

“ All the wild-fowl sang them to him,
In the moorlands and the fenlands,
In the melancholy marshes ;
Cbetowaik, the plover, sang them,
Mahng, the loon, the wild goose, Wawa,
The blue heron, the Shuh-suh-gah,
And the grouse, the Mushkodasa ! ”

If still farther you should ask me,
Saying, “ Who was Nawadaha ?
Tell us of this Nawadaha, ”
I should answer your inquiries
Straightway in such words as follow,

“ In the Vale of Tawasentha,
In the green and silent valley,
By the pleasant water-courses,
Dwelt the singer Nawadaha.
Round about the Indian village
Spread the meadows and the corn-fields,
And beyond them stood the forest,
Stood the groves of singing pine-trees,
Green in Summer, white in Winter,
Ever sighing, ever singing.

“ And the pleasant water-courses,
You could trace them through the valley,
By the rushing in the Spring-time,

By the alders in the Summer,
By the white fog in the Autumn,
By the black line in the Winter ;
And beside them dwelt the singer,
In the Vale of Tawasentha,¹
In the green and silent valley.

“There he sang of Hiawatha,
Sang the Song of Hiawatha,
Sang his wondrous birth and being,
How he prayed and how he fasted,
How he lived, and toiled, and suffered,
That the tribes of men might prosper,
That he might advance his people !”

Ye who love the haunts of Nature,
Love the sunshine of the meadow,
Love the shadow of the forest,
Love the wind among the branches,
And the rain-shower and the snow-storm,
And the rushing of great rivers
Through their palisades of pine-trees,
And the thunder in the mountains,
Whose innumerable echoes
Flap like eagles in their eyries ;—
Listen to these wild traditions,
To this Song of Hiawatha !

¹ This valley, now called Norman's Kill, is in Albany County, New York.

Ye who love a nation's legends,
Love the ballads of a people,
That like voices from afar off
Call to us to pause and listen,
Speak in tones so plain and childlike,
Scarcely can the ear distinguish
Whether they are sung or spoken :--
Listen to this Indian Legend,
To this Song of Hiawatha !

Ye whose hearts are fresh and simple,
Who have faith in God and Nature,
Who believe, that in all ages
Every human heart is human,
That in even savage bosoms
There are longings, yearnings, strivings,
For the good they comprehend not,
That the feeble hands and helpless,
Cropping blindly in the darkness,
Touch God's right hand in that darkness
And are lifted up and strengthened :--
Listen to this simply story,
To this Song of Hiawatha !

Ye, who sometimes, in your rambles
Through the green lanes of the country,
Where the tangled barberry-bushes
Hang their tufts of crimson berries
Over stone walls gray with mosses,