

**SANNILLAC, A
POEM. WITH NOTES**

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Sannillac, a Poem. With Notes by Henry Whiting & Lewis Cass & Henry R. Schoolcraft

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HENRY WHITING & LEWIS CASS & HENRY R. SCHOOLCRAFT

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A

P O E M .

BY HENRY WHITING.

WITH NOTES,

BY

LEWIS CASS AND HENRY R. SCHOOLCRAFT, Esqs.

BOSTON:

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PREFACE.

CHARLEVOIX, in his *Journal Historique*, in speaking of the island of Michillimackinac, says, 'Elle (the island) est cependant, un des lieux du Canada des plus célèbres, et elle a été longtemps, selon quelques anciennes traditions sauvages, la principale demeure d'une nation, qui portoit le meme nom, et dont on a compté, dit on, jusqu' a trente Bourgades, repandues aux environs de l'île. On prétend que ce sont les Iroquois (Mingoes) qui l'ont détruite, mais on ne dit pas en quel tems, ni a' quelle occasion. Ce que est certain, c'est qu'il n'y en a plus aucun vestige.'

Hints for such parts of the following pages, as relate to the wars between the Iroquois and Wyndots, were derived from the manuscripts of Governor Cass, which contain many traditions on this subject, gathered from the Wyndots now living.

These slender materials were deemed sufficient for the construction of a story, whose object is not so much to fill up the outline of aboriginal history, as to exhibit manners and customs, which are generally characteristic of the sons of the forest.

The author is aware of the novelty and hazard of attempting an Indian story, which excludes all agency of the whites, and that most, if not all of those stories which have appeared

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heretofore, have derived much of their interest from a due admixture of the European race. Atala might have lost half her charms, had she been made an unadulterated forest maiden.

There is an extreme simplicity in the manners and costume of savage life, which deprives the imagination of many powerful aids. What has been the influence of these disadvantages in the present instance, it is not for the author to determine.

SANNILLAC.

WHERE is the mighty race ! which, ere the keel
Of magnet-guided vessel dar'd to brave
The dark uncertainties, that, like a seal,
Clos'd up for ages all the Western wave, —
Had rov'd from shores which two broad oceans lave,
And down from highest North, through ev'ry clime,
To where the tempests 'round Fuego rave,
On each majestic stream, and height sublime,
In reckless liberty, through all the march of time ?

Not one, of tribes innumerable, that erst
Look'd out on ocean from Atlantic's shore,
Now wanders there, save remnants, poor, accur'd,
Where wild, primeval virtues shine no more.
The Southern Incas ! all have sunk in gore :
In vain their Andes mingled with the skies ;

While Northern Chiefs have still retir'd before
The Whites, till, looking back, with vengeful eyes,
They see how far behind their Mississippi lies !

But let not Whites bear all the deep reproach,
(Though justly charg'd with more than they can bear,)
For wild, inveterate feuds, that still encroach,
And turn each wigwam into bloody lair,
Had long been spreading desolation there,
Ere Europe's son the Western wilds did know ;
And dark traditions tell how deep their share
In all this work of death, as tale shall show,
Which we have gather'd where the forest still doth grow.

PART I.

ON Huron's wave there stands an isle,
Which lifts on high its tower-like pile,
Guarding the strait, whose promont sides
Press into union various tides,
From broad Superior rushing down,
Chill'd with the arctic winter's frown,
Or coming up from milder skies,
Where Michigania's sources rise.
This isle — by wild tradition long
Made theme of forest tale and song —
In ev'ry age has caught the eye
Of Indian, as he wander'd by,
Who sees it rise, like giant mound,
O'erlooking all the region round,
The clust'ring islands, sever'd main,
And straits drawn out, like liquid chain ;
And as his light canoe draws near,

He stays awhile its fleet career,
That, off'ring up a simple prayer,
And leaving simple tribute there,
The Manitou, whom fancy sees
Enshrouded 'mong the rocks and trees,
May send him on his course with fav'ring breeze.

'T was here in far receding times,
While yet in these interior climes,
Unseen had been the White man's trace,
Unheard, mayhap, his name or race,
(Save in vague rumor's startling tale,
Spreading from coast o'er hill and dale,
Of mighty monsters, ocean-bred,
Whose offspring filled the shores with dread,)
That one sequester'd wigwam stood,
Scarce seen beneath the bow'ring wood.

What time the Muse its tale would tell,
There liv'd within this sylvan cell
An aged Indian, weak and blind,
Whose tribe, now many winter's past,
Had sunk before the battle's blast,
And scarce a remnant left behind.
His head with years was furrow'd o'er,