

Golden Bird of Menominee.

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FIRST love, and the constancy of woman, have been favorite themes with the poets and romance-writers of all ages. Mainly, however, examples, upon which to found touching verses or eloquent paragraphs, have been taken from civilized society. Let me select one from rude forest life.

At the head-waters of the Red Cedar River, in the northern part of Wisconsin, is a beautiful lake, which the Indians called Menominee. There often the white man went to join his red brethren in the athletic sports of the hunting grounds, or in the quiet enjoyment of the fishing party.

One spring-time it happened that a young man wandered to the banks of Lake Menominee, and, after striking his tent in the forest, constructed a raft on which to explore the beautiful sheet of water he had discovered.

At sunset, on a pleasant evening, he sat upon the bank of Menominee, when a light foot startled him. He arose to his feet cautiously, and, looking about him, perceived an Indian maiden, who carried a heavy bark basket, filled with roots and herbs which she had been gathering. Her full dark eye met that of the young hunter, when she halted a moment, then fearlessly stepped within a few feet of him. The hunter

had a handsome face and a noble form, and the maiden gazed upon him with mute but eloquent admiration. She sat down her basket and pointed across the lake. The hunter understood her gesture, and bowing, showed her his raft, moored a few yards distant. Taking up her basket, the maiden proceeded to the rude vessel, and the hunter followed. He knew the language of her actions, and in half an hour had landed her on the opposite side of the lake. Swinging her basket on her arm, the maiden sprang upon the shore and disappeared in the forest.

On the morrow, when the hunter emerged from his tent, he found, at the rustic door, an offering of roots and fruits, prepared as Indian luxuries. He supposed that they were left as a reward for his gallantry to the young squaw, and when, during his hunt in the forest that day, he met a party of friendly Indians, he described to them the appearance of the maiden, and learned that she was the daughter of a chief, and the most beautiful squaw of the tribe. She was known as Golden Bird.

When the hunter returned to his camp, he found Golden Bird waiting for him with a present of choice game. Her smiles welcomed his appearance, and her manner, when she tendered him the present, told the hunter plainly, that the forest girl sought him as a lover; but he remembered one beyond the confines of the forest, with whom his troth was plighted, and, too honorable to deceive the trusting maiden, he endeavored to make her understand that he could not return her affection. In the trusting innocence of her love, she mistook this kindness, and interpreted his attentions as she wished him to interpret the offerings she had made. The forest near the hunter's tent was that night the Golden

Bird's chamber, and on the morrow, while he roamed near the Menominee, she gathered for him a handful of precious stones, and when he refused them, she wept. Laying them at the door of his tent, she wandered into the woods, disconsolate. When absent from him, she was ever gloomy and depressed, but when in his presence, especially if he gave her the slightest attention, was as gay and glad-hearted as any other beautiful bird of the forest.

She abandoned the wigwam of her fathers—refused the counsel of her friends—forsook her kindred and followed the pale-faced hunter. Her attentions were a burthen to him, and he resolved to change his camp.

One day she was absent for a few hours, and his raft was rowed to the outlet of the lake, and slowly it floated down the stream. When it was moored at night, the hunter congratulated himself that the Golden Bird had been eluded, but to his great surprise, before nightfall, the maiden appeared before him with an exclamation of joy, and tendered him a bundle of herbs ingeniously arranged.

Every look and gesture told him that, with her, the affair had become one of life and death; that his smile was, to her, heaven. Had not his heart been wedded to another, he could never have chosen for his bride one of the rude, untutored children of the forest, and he thought that if he could escape her attentions, in a few days she would forget him, return to her father's wigwam, and accept the love of one of the braves of her tribe. Alas, he knew not the strength of Golden Bird's affection. The bluffs were high and abrupt along the river. She could not follow the raft. The hunter refused to take her with him. Standing upon a high rock, as the pale-face, whom she had wooed, but who had rejected her love,

faded from her view, she watched his raft with streaming eyeballs, and when he could no longer be seen, still she looked; and when the sun sunk at night behind the hills lining the river, still Golden Bird gazed intently into the dim distance; and when, on the following morning, light gilded the tops of the rocks, it shown on her disheveled hair and disordered robe, and still her eyes, spell-bound, were fixed on the point at which the hunter had disappeared from view.

Three days afterward, when her friends, after diligent search, found her, she was leaning against a shelving rock, and her gaze was yet on the stream which had borne away the object of her devotion. An Indian lover was there, and he sought to recall her attention, but she heard not the tones of a voice with which she had been familiar from childhood. When they bore her away tenderly from the spot where she had the last view of the hunter, her eyes closed in despair. She was too weak to tell them her heart had gone after the pale-face, and her spirit would soon roam in the hunting grounds to which the spirits of the brave warriors of the tribe had departed; but they saw that her life was fast fading, and they watched with her, in the depths of the forest, until it went out. Her spirit withdrew from the body as peacefully as dies out the day on a calm summer evening.

No tales of the times of chivalry—no romances of heroic deeds in Oriental lands, portray constancy purer than that of this Indian maiden—ill-fated Golden Bird of Menominee.