INDIAN FOLK-SONGS OF PENNSYLVANIA

SHOEMAKER

28-I-44

#814

To albert Pisenthal Esq.
as a souvenir of this
visit to Ardmore
12/31/28 Herman F. McGirr

Three hundred copies printed and
the type distributed.

This is Number 175

Newman F. McGirr

"Even if the Indians did not originate American music they gave it the best adaptation to the American background and setting, a distinctive coloring that the years will improve rather than change."

—Ethelbert Nevin (*Correspondence*).

Henry W. Shoemaker.

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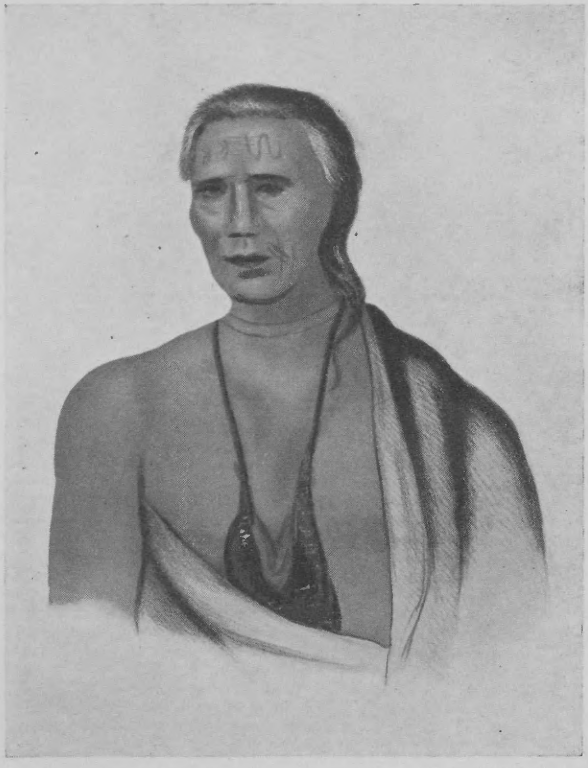


LAPPOWINZO
A Delaware Chief

INDIAN FOLK-SONGS OF PENNSYLVANIA

BY

HENRY W. SHOEMAKER

NEWMAN F. McGIRR
ARDMORE, PENNA.
1927

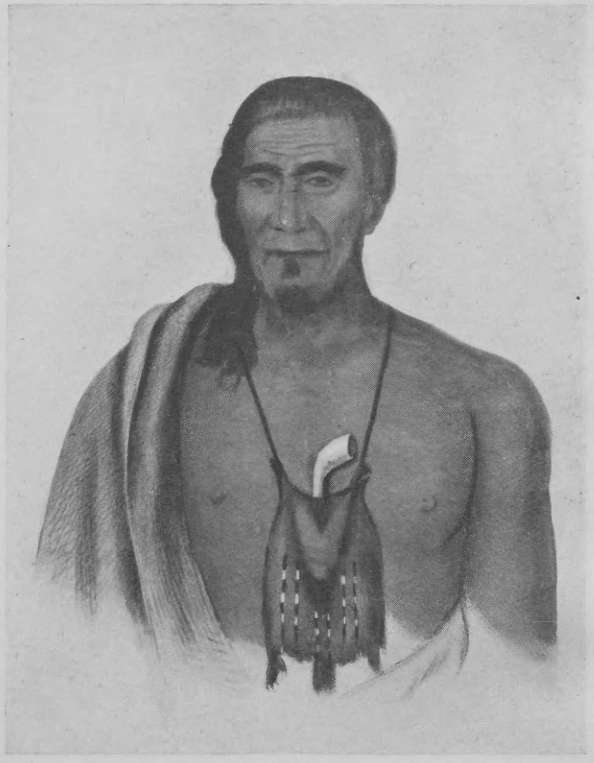
PENNSYLVANIA INDIAN FOLK-SONGS

FEW persons are aware that there is an Indian Reservation in Pennsylvania. When it is mentioned, the general reply is, "Oh, you must be mistaken; you refer to the one in New York State, just across the line." Few maps carried it, and the State Maps only recently, by the orders of former Governor Pinchot, when Chief Forester of Pennsylvania, who recognized its existence. But it is there, nevertheless, in Warren County, on the west bank of the Ohe-yu, or the "Beautiful River," now most generally called the Allegheny, and the nearest town is Corydon, where there is a good hotel, and the added interest that it contains the home of Philip Tome, author of "Thirty Years a Hunter," the classic of the big game fields of northern Pennsylvania. A ferryboat with an Indian ferryman will take the tourist or student across the river to the Reservation. It is well worth a visit, if only to meet the remnant of Pennsylvania's former rulers, and to see the monument which the Commonwealth erected over the grave of Ga-no-di-euh, or The Cornplanter, at a cost of $2,000, in 1868. This Reservation, of about 1,500 acres, was granted to The Cornplanter and his descendants in perpetuity, by the Commonwealth in grateful recognition of the great Chief's services in the Treaty of Fort Stanwix, 1784, in which most of what is now the northwestern portion of Pennsylvania was secured for the Commonwealth.

BUT to return to the subject of the present discourse: To the student of folk-songs, aboriginal music and folk-lore the Pennsylvania Reservation is chiefly interesting in being a practically untouched storehouse of valuable historical material. The

little band of redmen have defied the missionaries and uplifters, and cling tenaciously to their early beliefs and traditions, which they have zealously handed down, and the gradually lessening of their numbers will automatically cause the disappearance of their songs and legends, unless quickly collected. Charles F. Jenkins, a noted historian of the colonial period, at the dedication of the Chief Tammany monument at Playwicky, near Philadelphia, recently, stated that the latest census gave the Indian population of Pennsylvania as 358; at the present time there are not many more than 200 Indians in this State.

THE Indians on the Pennsylvania Reservation are natural musicians, and have been carefully trained in their native music. They know hundreds of chants and folk-songs, practically none of which have been collected by anthropologists or folklorists. What is their music like? Chief Strong Wolf, an Ojibway, who took a post-graduate course at the University of Pennsylvania, whose rendering of the "Good-Bye Chant" of the Ojibways at several notable monument dedications of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission produced a profound impression, says: "Indian music bears no resemblance to 'The Land of the Sky-Blue Waters,' or 'By the Waters of Minnetonka,' or other alleged 'Indian melodies.' Despite the general conception that Indian music consists of tom-toms and guttural noises, it is in reality very beautiful. Only the Indians themselves are familiar with the real tribal songs—those which have been handed down from generation to generation. These the Indians seldom sing for the white men. Most Indian music is low-toned and in the minor, and has a tragic note. There are only about three notes, one in the top of the head, one in the nose, and one deep down in the throat. There is definite melody, but of a quality that is strange to the ear of so-called higher civiliza-



TISH-CO-HAN
A Delaware Chief

tion. Indian music makes no use of what the white man calls 'harmony.' Naturally it would be difficult to take it down in musical notation. To do that one must apply 'harmony,' and that without changing the quality of the original is most difficult." Probably out of the hundreds of chants and songs still in existence among the Pennsylvania Indians but three or four have been prepared by score, or transcribed, by white musicians. There are few actual words to these songs, but the music represents words like the "motives" in Richard Wagner's music, and these are supposed to be conveyed by the singers themselves to the listeners. Old Thomas G. Simcox, of McElhattan, Clinton County, who spent his boyhood days among the last Indians in the West Branch Valley, on Nichols' Run, Lycoming County, once remarked that he asked Old Nichols, chief of this group, for the words of a chant which he called "Lappowinzo's Lament."

"THERE are very few words," said the chief, "but we Indians know from the tones of each bar what the story is." Pressed for a translation into words, Old Nichols gave the following prose "argument" to Mr. Simcox who attempted to turn it into free verse. This is the result, and it is probably far from the full meaning, and certainly far from the beauty of the song as sent straight from the heart of the singer to the heart of the listener. It is the story of the Lenni-Lenape Chieftain, Lappowinzo, who with Tish-Cohan, another chief, negotiated the nefarious Walking Purchase with some of the crafty young Penns, selling to the whites "as far as a man can go in a day," with disastrous results to the tribal boundaries, and the result that the old chief withdrew from his comfortable bark-house or wigwam on the banks of the Lehigh, and ended his days a voluntary exile at the foot of Mount Nittany, near the site of the present State College.

LAPPOWINZO'S LAMENT

THOU givest us little time, Great Spirit,
To know thy fair domain.
One glimpse, and clouds obscure the view,
Never to see again.
On Hokendaqua's winding course
Up to the salmon leap,
Where by the hemlock-hidden pools
The fish-otters creep.
And the corn-fields on the hill,
Swaying in the autumn breeze,
And the cabins of my people,
Showing just above the trees.
The great apple-orchards by the Lehigh,
Dark Children swing on the grape-vines by the beach,
My pole boat's rotting on the shore,
My fish-dam's crumbling at the reach.
Like a moose dogged through the Wind Gap,
A stranger to mine own,
No friendly voices urge me back
To the vale I called my home.
Thou givest us little time, Great Spirit,
To know thy fair domain,
A heaven 'crost the Endless Hills
Will never be the same.

John C. French, a unique and gifted Potter County historian, who spent many years among the Indians, has paraphrased and turned into words several very beautiful Indian melodies, among which is, "The Nuptials of Mondamin," a most appealing and colorful Seneca Trail Chant, sung annually at the Green Corn Festival. The chants are:

Mon-da-min—mystic name of Indian corn plant.

Puk-wan-nah—smoke from the peace pipe.

Ohe-yuh-anna—Beautiful River—The Allegheny. Branches from the north are: Oswayo, Hon-e-oy-e, Ischua, Jen-es-e-da-ga, Cone-wan-go and Ve-nan-go. From the south: Nunundah, Kinzu-quade, Tuna-gwant and Tunesasse.

Tun-un-guam—Frog Place, chief town on the Allegheny.

Tassel and Silk—hidden children; stamen and pistil of corn.

THE NUPTIALS OF MONDAMIN

Prelude:

LISTEN! I shall tell you
Of the nuptials of Mondamin,
On the beautiful River—Ohe-yu—
In the Seneca Reservation;
Of the Green Corn Festival,
Trail chant of the nation.

A Voice:

"Who shall seek the hidden Son,
Where the tasseled corn is growing?
Let them seek the Hidden One
From the silver Ohe-yu—
North along the Genessee,
Where the pigeon cocks are crowing,
Where Seneca maids are mowing
Hay 'long the Honeoye;
Where Seneca maids are hoeing
Corn along the Oswago;
Let them seek the Hidden Son
West across the hills to Ischua,
South among the hemlock trees,
'Mid flaming scarlet flora;
On the rapid stream, Nunundah,
Drenched in marshes to their knees!
He has vanished, like Pukwannah;
Let them hunt to Kinzu-quade.
Back along the Tuna-gwant,
On the trail to Jenesedaga.
Past the limpid Tunesasse,
Till the day and night are one!
Where Ohe-yuh-anna flowing
Sings below Oswayo glowing!
Where the sunet of Venango
Paints the tranquil Conewango,
Let them seek the Hidden Son
Till the sun and moon are one!"

THE BRIDE.

Second Voice:

"Who will find the Silken Maid,
Where the tasseled corn is growing?
Let them seek along the Genessee;
Let them hunt her on Oswayo,
Where giant pines are growing,
Let them seek and be afraid!
From Oswayo to the Ischua,
All the way to Tununguam—
Let them seek the Hidden Maid,
And find her, he who can!"

WEDDED.

A Chorus:

"Behold the children! She lies sleeping,
Where the green leaves closely fold her!
He shall wake first and behold her
Who is given to her keeping;
He shall strip her of her leaves,
As she sleeps among the sheaves,
Snowy white without a stain,
Neither marred by wind nor rain.
So from slumber she shall waken,
And behold the green robe shaken
From his shoulders to her own!
Now the two shall dwell together"—

Priest:

"Ye-ji-se-way-ad-kerone!"
(Heiro! I have spoken.)

The dance begins after the symbolic wedding: On the trail, only the two voices chant the first two sections.

CHARLIE GORDON, one of the leading singers at the Cornplanter Reservation several years ago, gave an entertainment at the M. E. Church at McElhattan, singing in all two dozen Indian chants and songs, but without any attempt to give any additional word equivalents. Before he sang the songs he explained the nature of these Indian folk-songs. "They represent the light and the dark sides of life," he said, "joy and sorrow. There are chants of birth, of love, of marriage, death and burial. There are songs of the

seeds, of planting, cultivating and harvesting. There are songs of hunting and fishing, the seasons, war, victory, defeat, memorial, greeting and farewell; in fact there is music for every event in the lives of the Indians, the simple as well as important, from the dawn of life until they are laid in their graves. There are some very beautiful Chants to the Great Spirit, and Prayers for Immortal Life." Charlie Gordon's repertoire bore out all he said, and held the little audience of mountaineers spellbound for more than an hour.

AS stated previously the older Indians on the Pennsylvania Reservation were Pagans. Jesse Logan, grand-nephew of James Logan, "The greatest of Indian orators," and one of the most interesting redmen whom the writer has ever met thus summarized his own belief and that of his generation: "I don't believe that we have achieved immortality as yet, though it is much to be desired. I think that at death the soul of man enters a canoe, and starts on a journey across a broad water. As no one has ever gotten to the end of that journey, we do not know what the distant land is like, but doubtless all will be very happy there." This recalls old Seth Nelson, the famous hunter of Round Island, Clinton County, telling the writer of John Smoke, a Seneca Indian, who lived at the mouth of Three Runs, almost directly across the Sinnemahoning from Nelson's home, who said that the Indians originated in the far East, that some of them being very adventurous came to a peninsula which they followed until they reached a great Continent, which they explored, but when they returned to the peninsula the waves had washed over it, and they could not go back, and could build no canoes strong enough to brave the storms so they remained, and became the ancestors of the American Indians.

POSSIBLY their music originated in the East, and has the same barbaric undercurrents. Yet new ideas were later gained by intercourse with the whites, and at all times were the Indians rapt listeners to the white man's music and the Indian music may have undergone modifications. They were very adept at learning the bagpipes from the Scotch-Irish pipers in the Cumberland Valley, until several pipers were waylaid and their pipes stolen by their too-admiring red-skinned pupils. Doubtless the so-called jazz music of today is a blend of the pioneer music of the frontier, the Scotch, the German, the Huguenot, the Spanish and Waldensian, plus undercurrents of Indian and Negro aboriginal melodies. Perhaps the Indian music has a greater part in its composition than we suppose. This will be made clear when a sufficient number of the finer Indian folk-songs have been collected. The writer has had a number of interesting talks with Jesse Logan, at the Reservation, prior to his death, past the century mark, in 1917. Old Logan was a link with the glorious past of his race, and kept true to all their early manners and traditions. He was an archer, adept at playing the long ball and the snow snake, a marksman, a river driver and raftman and had hunted the elk, the panther and the wolf in the forests of northern Pennsylvania. He had composed a number of rivermen's songs, and one particularly fine "Wolf Chant." This Wolf Chant seemed to have caught the music and poetry of the packs of wolves howling about a settler's cabin on a wintry night. The writer asked the venerable redman how he came to compose this Wolf Chant, which appealed to him most of all of the old Chief's varied compositions, and this is the aged redman's story. It may seem a little coarse or crude in parts, but it is a cross-sectional view of the life of the times, in those days of transition between the passing of the redmen and the new order of things: —(it is written down as nearly as possible in the narrator's words).

I HAVE told you," said Jesse Logan, "of the time when I went to the Muskingum and found the bones of my great-uncle James Logan, the Mingo orator, and carried them on a pony sewed up in an elk's hide to the Wolf Rocks in the Seven Mountains, and buried them there. How in High Valley I met and loved the white girl Ida Smull, yet did not have the white man's assurance to declare myself, for the Indian girls do all the choosing and love-making. I felt after that I ought never to notice those haughty white girls again, but time was to prove differently for both ill and good. In my earlier days I rafted on the Allegheny to Pittsburg, but later was pilot on the West Branch, running from Driftwood and Clearfield to Anderson's Ferry, now called Marietta, and sometimes clear to Baltimore. In those days, before the Sunbury and Erie Railroad was built we always walked home from Harrisburg, although sometimes we traveled by canal, or in stage-coaches, or in the wagon-beds of friendly Conestoga wagoners. Most of the rivermen, but principally the white men contrived to put up for the night at the Sign of the King of Prussia, at New Berlin, then the Seat of Justice of Union County. It was a most commodious tavern. There were two huge open fireplaces in the long dining room which had a double row of tables from end to end, and I've seen every place taken by hungry raftmen, and there was a fireplace in the bar, and ten-plate stoves in the vast upstairs room under the rafters where we slept. It was in the cold winter of 1857, when we could hardly sell our rafts, everybody was so 'short,' that I put up there for the first time. I generally slept in barns, or under wagons, but this time, poor as I was, I went to the hotel because I had seen the landlady's daughter in the yard shovelling snow. She was a white girl, but I could almost picture her having Indian blood, though she said her father was a Quaker, and her mother of Greek refugee origin. Her name was Clare Wolstencraft, but her mother's name was Asch-

man, and she was then the wife of the Dutchman who ran the King of Prussia.

CLARE was very dark, her black hair was stiff and kinky, and cut short, and stuck out from her head, but her skin was as white as the marble of the fireplaces at the Queen of Spain's home at Farrandsville, where I often stopped. Her eyes were as black as the coal on the barges that came down the river from Karthaus, I know for the Dutch boys on the arks often threw lumps of it at me, and called me a 'danged Incha.' When she walked, she bent over a little, just as the stem of an Easter flower does in blackthorn weather. I entered the hotel boldly, was well received by the other rivermen, attracted the notice of the beautiful girl, and my second romance with a white girl had begun. I made three trips that spring, and three that fall. There wasn't any money in it, but I wanted to be near to Clare. I did not think any more about my color, except that I was the great-grandson of mighty Shikellimy, vicegerent of the Iroquois, the son of a French-Canadian Voyageur, whose grim stone face looks down from the Blue Hill where the rivers meet. The girl seemed always glad to see me, and we had many pleasant hours together. I sang her many old Indian chants and she seemed to like my music. When we parted in November, 1857, she said that she wanted a little dog yet one that would be different from the penny-dogs of the locality, so I promised her a lenni-chum or Indian dog, a very rare breed at the time on the Reservation. On my first trip down stream in March, 1858, it was one of the earliest trips ever made by a raft, there was live water, and the ice seemed to go out for my pleasure, I moored my fleet at Hummel's Wharf and putting the dog, which I had brought down on the raft, under my arm, started up the Karoondinha, for the Sign of the King of Prussia.

IT was late on a Sunday afternoon when I arrived, and I found Clare seated by the fire in the dining room reading a Dutch Psalm-Book and she seemed overjoyed to possess the lenni-chum which had a sharp muzzle and erect ears like a little wolf. I had bought a nice collar and leash at Williamsport, and all this added to her child-like happiness. I spent the night at the hotel, being in no hurry to depart, occupying alone the huge apartment over the dining room, for no other raftmen had appeared that early in the season. I left the next morning, Clare leading the lenni-chum, accompanying me through the Scotch mist to the end of the street, where the double line of maple trees end, and there was too much fog to see Jack's Mountain frowning down upon the ancient town of New Berlin. I kissed her for the first time, the first time I had ever kissed a girl, white or red, for Indians do not show their love that way. We parted in the fog, I promising to remain with her longer on my return journey. I put on my skates, and returned down the frozen creek-bed singing old Indian melodies, as I swept along, to the mouth of the Creek where my fleet lay at anchor. I sang the whole way down the river, my voice rising above the roar of the waters as we shot the half-halls, went through the chute at Green's Dam, and skirted the perilous 'Negro heads' at Chickies, and the Blue Rock.

I DIDN'T get much for my spars, but was content and started back happy. There were a dozen of us in the party, and we made the usual lark of the return trip. At the Karoondinha where a band of German Gypsies, of the Reinhold Clan, were camped on the green I turned off to go to the King of Prussia, the others would take a shorter route through Graybill Valley or Dry Valley. It was a week to the day from the time of my last visit, and I fancied that I was not unexpected. Yet I could find no one about the

tavern until I ran into Flavel Bergstresser, the stable boy, who was dozing in the granary. "The old folks are taking a sleep," he said in Dutch, "and Clare is out walking, and gathering the 'ards-dreiss' or arbutus, with her friend." "What friend?" I fairly gasped. "Why, the same one of course she's always had," said the blunt-spoken Dutch boy. I pretended I knew, and started along the street, to where the great cone-like head of Jack's Mountain frowns down upon the ancient town. From the lane that led to the Academy I could see a couple coming towards me, the man leading a dog. Soon I noticed one of the party was Clare, her apron full of sprays of arbutus, the dog was the lenni-chum, and the man none other than an ill-favored little German gypsy named Jesse Womeldorf, known on the highways as "Gypsy Ike," a hanger-on in the tents of the Reinholds (who were very respectable people). Often he had insulted me along the highway, for the Gypsies hated nothing half so much as an Indian, ever since the first clash between the two dark races in the market-cross at Lancaster in 1763. I waited until they came up to me, but the girl made no move to introduce me to Gypsy Ike, and needless to say I did not want to meet the little fellow. He was shorter than I am, and just as dark, his face was shaved except for side-whiskers, and in that alone I envied him, for I could hardly grow any hairs on my upper lip, and it was then the style for the rivermen, especially the pilots to wear long drooping mustaches, and chin beards. I should have gone my way but I turned back, and walked with the couple, and the lenni-chum to the King of Prussia.

THE night wind was swaying and creaking the faded sign-board with the old German War Lord's face on it, as we entered the public-house. We all had supper together, yet I never spoke to Gypsy Ike, nor he to me. We spent the evening

roasting chestnuts in the big fireplace. At ten o'clock Clare took a rush-light, and lit us up to the big barrack above the dinning room under the rafters, sticks of clear white pine sixty feet in length. She pointed to a crib bed near the door for me, perhaps a gentle hint, and to a four poster in the centre of the room nearer the stove for Gypsy Ike. She left us, saying good-night in German, and we took off our boots in the dark, and got into our respective beds. I could not sleep, though I pretended to sleep, for I lay quietly, thinking, mystified by the revelation of Clare's calm duplicity. It must have been midnight when I heard the Gypsy getting out of his bed, and in stocking feet he stealthily approached my bunk! 'What does he mean!' I thought, 'he has no quarrel with me, he is the victor, yet I am prepared for him.' Nearer and nearer he came, until with a spring heavy and clumsy as a black bear he was upon me, and his great hands had gripped my throat. I had noticed that he wore a heavy red silk sash about his waist. If he still had it on I was saved. In it was slung a hand-forged dagger or 'schlor,' handle and all made of a single piece of finely tempered steel; which I much admired; calmly I reached for it in the dark! It was there, quickly I seized it, I pressed it against his heart, as his fingers tightened about my throat. I pricked his flesh with the needle point. 'Let go,' I shouted, 'you vile She-kener, for you will be the first to die.' He was slow to release me, so I drew his blood, and he let go; once off me, I was upon him, and I beat him soundly over the head with the dirk, until he yelled for mercy.

SUDDENLY the door opened. There stood Clare, holding aloft the rush-light, she was clad only in her shift, her bare legs trembling, her black eyes were flashing with pain and indignation. I had never seen her look so lovely; with her was her mother, wearing a dirty wrapper, her hair in curl papers. The old

woman cursed me loudly in Dutch, and ordered me from the house. I had drawn my big horse-pistol, and keeping Gypsy Ike 'covered,' gathered up my things, leaving the ugly fellow lying on the floor, bellowing like the 'stuck pig' he was. I started along the lonely, mid-night, chilly road, in the direction of Youngmanstown. I still had the Gypsy's 'schlor,' which I had taken for safe-keeping as he wasn't fit to carry a gentleman's weapon. Some time after I had passed through Youngmanstown in the direction of Hartley Hall I heard the rumble of horses' hoofs on the frozen road. I stopped to see the mail-coach go by. A girl was driving. I recognized her as Deborah Rohn, sister of John Rohn, like myself a river pilot, who many years later was mysteriously slain on Hickory Hill, in Clearfield County. She recognized me, and slowed down her four big Conestoga horses, and asked me to get up with her. It was hard to refuse, as I was lonely and sad and always thought a lot of Deborah Rohn. Climbing up beside her, I noticed that another girl was seated just back of her. She was younger than Deborah, slimmer and more elegant, of a different station in life. As Deborah was of a class above Clare, so was this young girl above Deborah, everything is caste with the Indians, we are intuitive to the most subtle social differences in mankind. We recognize a gentleman at sight and treat him accordingly.

DEBORAH quckly introduced me to the young lady 'Martha Hindman,' how pretty she was, dark too, with clearly marked features, brown eyes, and red lips, her cheeks were red from the frosty morning, and she wore several fur capes and over them was thrown a water-proof in charming dis-array. I soon learned that she was coming back to her home in Jersey Shore, from Millerstown on the Juniata, where she had taken the stage, after a visit in Kentucky, with her uncle Col. Thomas Hindman, for whom a

county in the 'dark and bloody ground' was named. Our eyes met, there was a sudden sympathy and understanding. We became friends instantly in the way that Indians become friends, the girl 'coming' most of the way. She noticed the knife, from which I had forgotten to wipe the blood, for I had jabbed the nasty She-kener pretty deep, and she made me promise I'd tell her the whole story. Suffice to say that the time went by so quickly that I forgot chagrin, cold, hunger, revenge, until we put up for the night at Clark's Tavern on White Deer Mountain above Collomsville. It was long after dark, and snowing, and the last four horses, as 'Mammy' Clark would say, were 'ferstrucht.' The landlord was hospitable, but most everybody was tired excepting Martha and myself and we elected to remain by the big old-fashioned fire-place, after the others had taken their rush-lights, tallowdips and candles and retired.

AS we sat there on the big settle or 'love-seat,' we did not use the formal Dutch courting blocks, in the stillness of the night, a great pack of wolves came out of the hemlocks across the road and commenced howling. Deep, mournful, soulful and sorrowing it was, the very voice of the wilderness. Martha seemed as impressed as I was, and edged closer to me, even if I was an Indian. I semed inspired, and carried to another world. Every moment was fuller of untasted joys. And all the while the wolves kept up their savage complaining, running around and around the house in the snow, as their voices and their spoor the next morning showed. Then a shot rang out, old Billy Clark's flintlock fired from an upper window to scare the wolves away. Silently they slunk into the vast hemlock forests, and all was still. Softly and slowly I began to chant to Martha a new and unexpected melody, the song of the wolves, the 'Wolf Chant.' Again and again in various minor keys I repeated it,

and as she huddled closer against my breast she begged me to continue, and I sang, and sang in minor key until overcome by sheer happiness we fell asleep in each other's arms. Deborah called us at 6.00 A. M. to tell us to get a bite of breakfast, that the coach was ready to start for Jersey Shore.

THAT is the story how one piece of Indian music was composed, others probably had similar beginnings," concluded old Jesse Logan, as he got up from his bench by the ten-plate stove and filled his corncob pipe with fragrant Indian tobacco, and looked out at the Ohe-yu, raging purple brown from the spring flood.

JESSE LOGAN has gone to his grave with his folk-songs unrecorded.

THE END.