

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm
Garnett Engels Schiller Byron Maupassant Schiller
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka
Cotton Dostoyevsky Kipling Doyle
Baum Henry Nietzsche Willis
Leslie Dumas Flaubert Turgenev Balzac
Stockton Vatsyayana Crane
Burroughs Verne
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Busch
Homer Tolstoy Whitman
Darwin Thoreau Twain
Potter Zola Lawrence Dickens Plato
Kant Freud Jowett Stevenson Andersen
London Descartes Cervantes Burton Hesse Harte
Poe Aristotle Wells Voltaire Cooke
Hale James Hastings Shakespeare
Bunner Shakespeare Chambers Irving
Richter Chekhov da Shaw Wodehouse
Doré Dante Pushkin Alcott
Swift Chekhov Newton



tredition was established in 2006 by Sandra Latusseck and Soenke Schulz. Based in Hamburg, Germany, tredition offers publishing solutions to authors and publishing houses, combined with worldwide distribution of printed and digital book content. tredition is uniquely positioned to enable authors and publishing houses to create books on their own terms and without conventional manufacturing risks.

For more information please visit: www.tredition.com

TREDITION CLASSICS

This book is part of the TREDITION CLASSICS series. The creators of this series are united by passion for literature and driven by the intention of making all public domain books available in printed format again - worldwide. Most TREDITION CLASSICS titles have been out of print and off the bookstore shelves for decades. At tredition we believe that a great book never goes out of style and that its value is eternal. Several mostly non-profit literature projects provide content to tredition. To support their good work, tredition donates a portion of the proceeds from each sold copy. As a reader of a TREDITION CLASSICS book, you support our mission to save many of the amazing works of world literature from oblivion. See all available books at www.tredition.com.



The content for this book has been graciously provided by Project Gutenberg. Project Gutenberg is a non-profit organization founded by Michael Hart in 1971 at the University of Illinois. The mission of Project Gutenberg is simple: To encourage the creation and distribution of eBooks. Project Gutenberg is the first and largest collection of public domain eBooks.

The Feast of the Virgins and Other Poems

Hanford Lennox Gordon

Imprint

This book is part of TREDITION CLASSICS

Author: Hanford Lennox Gordon
Cover design: Buchgut, Berlin - Germany

Publisher: tredition GmbH, Hamburg - Germany
ISBN: 978-3-8424-7779-7

www.tredition.com
www.tredition.de

Copyright:
The content of this book is sourced from the public domain.

The intention of the TREDITION CLASSICS series is to make world literature in the public domain available in printed format. Literary enthusiasts and organizations, such as Project Gutenberg, worldwide have scanned and digitally edited the original texts. tredition has subsequently formatted and redesigned the content into a modern reading layout. Therefore, we cannot guarantee the exact reproduction of the original format of a particular historic edition. Please also note that no modifications have been made to the spelling, therefore it may differ from the orthography used today.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Address to the Flag
- A Million More
- An Old English Oak
- Anthem
- Betzko
- Beyond
- Byron and the Angel
- Change
- Charge of the "Black-Horse"
- Charge of Fremont's Body-Guard
- Charity
- Chickadee
- Christmas Eve [Illustrated]
- Daniel
- Do They Think of Us?
- Dust to Dust
- Fame
- Fido
- Gettysburg: Charge of the First Minnesota
- Heloise
- Hope
- Hurrah for the Volunteers!
- Isabel
- Lines on the Death of Captain Coats
- Love will Find
- Mauley [Illustrated]
- Men
- Minnetonka [Illustrated]
- Mrs. McNair
- My Dead
- My Father-Land
- My Heart's on the Rhine

- Night Thoughts
- New Years Address, 1866 [Illustrated]
- O Let Me Dream the Dreams of Long Ago
- Only a Private Killed
- On Reading President Lincoln's Letter
- Out of the Depths
- Pat and the Pig
- Pauline [Illustrated]
- Poetry
- Prelude – The Mississippi
- Sailor Boy's Song
- Spring [Illustrated]
- Thanksgiving
- The Devil and the Monk [Illustrated]
- The Draft
- The Dying Veteran
- The Feast of the Virgins [Illustrated]
- The Legend of the Falls [Illustrated]
- The Minstrel
- The Old Flag
- The Pioneer [Illustrated]
- The Reign of Reason
- The Sea-Gull [Illustrated]
- The Tariff on Tin [Illustrated]
- To Mollie
- To Sylva
- Twenty Years Ago [Illustrated]
- Wesselenyi [Illustrated]
- Winona [Illustrated]

PREFACE

At odd hours during an active and busy life I have dallied with the Muses. I found in them, in earlier years, rest from toil and drudgery and, later, relief from physical suffering.

Broken by over-work and compelled to abandon the practice of my profession—the law, I wrote *Pauline* after I had been given up to die by my physicians. It proved to be a better 'medicine' for me than all the quackeries of the quacks. It diverted my mind from myself and, perhaps, saved my life. When published, its reception by the best journals of this country and England was so flattering and, at the same time, the criticisms of some were so just, that I have been induced to carefully revise the poem and to publish my re-touched *Pauline* in this volume. I hope and believe I have greatly improved it. Several of the minor poems have been published heretofore in journals and magazines; others of equal or greater age flap their wings herein for the first time; a few peeped from the shell but yesterday.

I am aware that this volume contains several poems that a certain class of critics will condemn, but they are my "chicks" and I will gather them under my wings.

"None but an author knows an author's cares,
Or Fancy's fondness for the child she bears."—*Cowper*.

Much of my life has been spent in the Northwest—on the frontier of civilization, and I became personally acquainted with many of the chiefs and braves of the Dakota and Ojibway (Chippewa) Indians. I have written of them largely from my own personal knowledge, and endeavored, above all things, to be accurate, and to present them true to the life.

For several years I devoted my leisure hours to the study of the language, history, traditions, customs and superstitions of the Dakotas. These Indians are now commonly called the "Sioux"—a name given them by the early French traders and *voyageurs*. "Dakota"

signifies *alliance* or *confederation*. Many separate bands, all having a common origin and speaking a common tongue, were united under this name. See "*Tah-Koo Wah-Kan*," or "*The Gospel Among the Dakotas*," by Stephen R. Riggs, pp. 1 to 6 inc.

They were but yesterday the occupants and owners of the fair forests and fertile prairies of Minnesota—a brave, hospitable and generous people—barbarians, indeed, but noble in their barbarism. They may be fitly called the Iroquois of the West. In form and features, in language and traditions, they are distinct from all other Indian tribes. When first visited by white men, and for many years afterwards, the Falls of St. Anthony (by them called the *Ha Ha*) was the center of their country. They cultivated corn and tobacco, and hunted the elk, the beaver and the bison. They were open-hearted, truthful and brave. In their wars with other tribes they seldom slew women or children, and rarely sacrificed the lives of their prisoners.

For many years their chiefs and head men successfully resisted the attempts to introduce spirituous liquors among them. More than a century ago an English trader was killed at Mendota, near the present city of St. Paul, because he persisted, after repeated warnings by the chiefs, in dealing out *mini wakan* (Devil-water) to the Dakota braves.

With open arms and generous hospitality they welcomed the first white men to their land, and were ever faithful in their friendship, till years of wrong and robbery, and want and insult, drove them to desperation and to war. They were barbarians, and their warfare was barbarous, but not more barbarous than the warfare of our Saxon, Celtic and Norman ancestors. They were ignorant and superstitious. Their condition closely resembled the condition of our British forefathers at the beginning of the Christian era. Macaulay says of Britain: "Her inhabitants, when first they became known to the Tyrian mariners, were little superior to the natives of the Sandwich Islands." And again: "While the German princes who reigned at Paris, Toledo, Aries and Ravenna listened with reverence to the instructions of bishops, adored the relics of martyrs, and took part eagerly in disputes touching the Nicene theology, the rulers of Wessex and Mercia were still performing savage rites in the temples of Thor and Woden."

The days of the Dakotas are done. The degenerate remnants of that once powerful and warlike people still linger around the forts and agencies of the Northwest, or chase the caribou and the elk on the banks of the Saskatchewan, but the Dakotas of old are no more. The brilliant defeat of Custer, by Sitting Bull and his braves, was their last grand rally against the resistless march of the sons of the Saxons. The plow-shares of a superior race are fast leveling the sacred mounds of their dead. But yesterday, the shores of our lakes and our rivers were dotted with their *teepees*, their light canoes glided over our waters, and their hunters chased the deer and the buffalo on the sites of our cities. To-day, they are not. Let us do justice to their memory, for there was much that was noble in their natures.

In the Dakota Legends, I have endeavored to faithfully present many of the customs and superstitions, and some of the traditions, of that people. I have taken very little 'poetic license' with their traditions; none, whatever, with their customs and superstitions. In my studies for these Legends I was greatly aided by the Rev. S.R. Riggs, author of the "*Grammar and Dictionary of the Dakota Language*" "*Tah-Koo Wah-Kan*," &c., and for many years a missionary among the Dakotas. He patiently answered my numerous inquiries and gave me valuable information. I am also indebted to the late Gen. H.H. Sibley, one of the earliest American traders among them, and to Rev. S.W. Pond, of Shakopee, one of the first Protestant missionaries to these people, and himself the author of poetical versions of some of their principal legends; to Mrs. Eastman's "*Dacotah*," and last, but not least, to the Rev. E.D. Neill, whose admirable "*History of Minnesota*" so fully and faithfully presents almost all that is known of the history, traditions, customs, manners and superstitions of the Dakotas.

In *Winona* I have "tried my hand" on a new hexameter verse. With what success, I leave to those who are better able to judge than I. If I have failed, I have but added another failure to the numerous attempts to naturalize hexameter verse in the English language.

It will be observed that I have slightly changed the length and the rhythm of the old hexameter line; but it is still hexameter, and, I think, improved.

I have not written for profit nor published for fame. Fame is a coy goddess that rarely bestows her favors on him who seeks her—a phantom that many pursue and but few overtake.

She delights to hover for a time, like a ghost, over the graves of dead men who know not and care not: to the living she is a veritable *Ignis Fatuus*. But every man owes something to his fellowmen, and I owe much.

If my friends find half the pleasure in reading these poems that I have found in writing them, I shall have paid my debt and achieved success.

H.L. GORDON.

Minneapolis, November 1, 1891.

PRELUDE

THE MISSISSIPPI

The numerals refer to *Notes* in appendix.

Onward rolls the Royal River, proudly sweeping to the sea,
Dark and deep and grand, forever wrapt in myth and mystery.

Lo he laughs along the highlands, leaping o'er the granite walls;

Lo he sleeps among the islands, where the loon her lover calls.

Still like some huge monster winding downward through the prairied plains,

Seeking rest but never finding, till the tropic gulf he gains.

In his mighty arms he claspeth now an empire broad and grand;

In his left hand lo he graspeth leagues of fen and forest land;

In his right the mighty mountains, hoary with eternal snow,

Where a thousand foaming fountains singing seek the plains below.

Fields of corn and feet of cities lo the mighty river laves,

Where the Saxon sings his ditties o'er the swarthy warriors' graves.

Aye, before the birth of Moses — ere the Pyramids were piled —

All his banks were red with roses from the sea to nor'lands wild,

And from forest, fen and meadows, in the deserts of the north,

Elk and bison stalked like shadows, and the tawny tribes came forth;

Deeds of death and deeds of daring on his leafy banks were done,

Women loved and men went warring, ere the siege of Troy

begun.

Where his foaming waters thundered, roaring o'er the rocky walls,

Dusky hunters sat and wondered, listening to the spirits' calls.

"*Ha-ha!*" [76] cried the warrior greeting from afar the cataract's roar;

"*Ha-ha!*" rolled the answer beating down the rock-ribbed leagues of shore.

Now, alas, the bow and quiver and the dusky braves have fled,

And the sullen, shackled river drives the droning mills instead.

Where the war-whoop rose, and after women wailed their warriors slain,

List the Saxon's silvery laughter, and his humming hives of gain.

Swiftly sped the tawny runner o'er the pathless prairies then,
Now the iron-reindeer sooner carries weal or woe to men.

On thy bosom, Royal River, silent sped the birch canoe
Bearing brave with bow and quiver on his way to war or woo;

Now with flaunting flags and streamers – mighty monsters of the deep –

Lo the puffing, panting steamers through thy foaming waters sweep;

And behold the grain-fields golden, where the bison grazed of old;

See the fanes of forests olden by the ruthless Saxon felled.

Plumèd pines that spread their shadows ere Columbus spread his sails,

Firs that fringed the mossy meadows ere the Mayflower braved the gales,

Iron oaks that nourished bruin while the Vikings roamed the main,

Crashing fall in broken ruin for the greedy marts of gain.

Still forever and forever rolls the restless river on,
Slumbering oft but ceasing never while the circling centuries
run.

In his palm the lakelet lingers, in his hair the brooklets hide,
Grasped within his thousand fingers lies a continent fair and
wide—

Yea, a mighty empire swarming with its millions like the
bees,

Delving, drudging, striving, storming, all their lives, for
golden ease.

Still, methinks, the dusky shadows of the days that are no
more,

Stalk around the lakes and meadows, haunting oft the wont-
ed shore:

Hunters from the land of spirits seek the bison and the deer
Where the Saxon now inherits golden field and silver mere;
And beside the mound where buried lies the dark-eyed maid
he loves,

Some tall warrior, wan and wearied, in the misty moonlight
moves.

See—he stands erect and lingers—stoic still, but loth to go—
Clutching in his tawny fingers feathered shaft and polished
bow.

Never wail or moan he utters and no tear is on his face,
But a warrior's curse he mutters on the crafty Saxon race.

O thou dark, mysterious River, speak and tell thy tales to me;
Seal not up thy lips forever—veiled in mist and mystery.

I will sit and lowly listen at the phantom-haunted falls
Where thy waters foam and glisten o'er the rugged, rocky
walls,

Till some spirit of the olden, mystic, weird, romantic days
Shall emerge and pour her golden tales and legends through
my lays.

Then again the elk and bison on thy grassy banks shall feed,
And along the low horizon shall the plumed hunter speed;
Then again on lake and river shall the silent birch canoe
Bear the brave with bow and quiver on his way to war or
woo:

Then the beaver on the meadow shall rebuild his broken
wall,

And the wolf shall chase his shadow and his mate the pan-
ther call.

From the prairies and the regions where the pine-plumed
forest grows

Shall arise the tawny legions with their lances and their
bows;

And again the cries of battle shall resound along the plain,
Bows shall twang and quivers rattle, women wail their war-
riors slain;

And by lodge-fire lowly burning shall the mother from afar
List her warrior's steps returning from the daring deeds of
war.

[Illustration: THE GAME OF BALL]

THE FEAST OF THE VIRGINS ^[1]

A LEGEND OF THE DAKOTAS

In pronouncing Dakota words give "a" the sound of "ah",—"e" the sound of "a",—"i" the sound of "e" and "u" the sound of "oo;" sound "ee" as in English. The numerals refer to *Notes* in appendix.

THE GAME OF BALL ^[2]

Clear was the sky as a silver shield;
The bright sun blazed on the frozen field.
On ice-bound river and white-robed prairie
The diamonds gleamed in the flame of noon;
But cold and keen were the breezes airy
Wa-zi-ya ^[3] blew from his icy throne.

On the solid ice of the silent river
The bounds are marked, and a splendid prize,
A robe of black-fox lined with beaver,
Is hung in view of the eager eyes;
And fifty merry Dakota maidens,
The fairest-molded of womankind
Are gathered in groups on the level ice.
They look on the robe and its beauty gladdens
And maddens their hearts for the splendid prize.
Lo the rounded ankles and raven hair
That floats at will on the wanton wind,
And the round, brown arms to the breezes bare,
And breasts like the mounds where the waters meet, ^[4]
And feet as fleet as the red deer's feet,
And faces that glow like the full, round moon
When she laughs in the luminous skies of June.

The leaders are chosen and swiftly divide
The opposing parties on either side.
Wiwâstè ^[5] is chief of a nimble band,
The star-eyed daughter of Little Crow; ^[6]
And the leader chosen to hold command
Of the band adverse is a haughty foe –
The dusky, impetuous Hârpstinâ, ^[7]
The queenly cousin of Wâpasâ. ^[8]

Kapoza's chief and his tawny hunters
Are gathered to witness the queenly game.
The ball is thrown and a net encounters,
And away it flies with a loud acclaim.
Swift are the maidens that follow after,
And swiftly it flies for the farther bound;
And long and loud are the peals of laughter,
As some fair runner is flung to ground;
While backward and forward, and to and fro,
The maidens contend on the trampled snow.
With loud "*Ihó! – Itó! – Ihó!*" ^[9]
And waving the beautiful prize anon,
The dusky warriors cheer them on.
And often the limits are almost passed,
As the swift ball flies and returns. At last
It leaps the line at a single bound
From the fair Wiwâstè's sturdy arm
Like a fawn that flies from the baying hound.
The wild cheers broke like a thunder storm
On the beetling bluffs and the hills profound,
An echoing, jubilant sea of sound.
Wakâwa, the chief, and the loud acclaim
Announced the end of the hard-won game,
And the fair Wiwâstè was victor crowned.

Dark was the visage of Hârpstinâ
When the robe was laid at her rival's feet,
And merry maidens and warriors saw
Her flashing eyes and her look of hate,

As she turned to Wakâwa, the chief, and said:
"The game was mine were it fairly played.
I was stunned by a blow on my bended head,
As I snatched the ball from slippery ground
Not half a fling from Wiwâstè's bound.
The cheat — behold her! for there she stands
With the prize that is mine in her treacherous hands.
The fawn may fly, but the wolf is fleet;
The fox creeps sly on *Magâ's* ^[10] retreat,
And a woman's revenge — it is swift and sweet."

She turned to her lodge, but a roar of laughter
And merry mockery followed after.
Little they heeded the words she said,
Little they cared for her haughty tread,
For maidens and warriors and chieftain knew
That her lips were false and her charge untrue.

Wiwâstè, the fairest Dakota maiden,
The sweet-faced daughter of Little Crow,
To her *teepee* ^[11] turned with her trophy laden,
The black robe trailing the virgin snow.
Beloved was she by her princely father,
Beloved was she by the young and old,
By merry maidens and many a mother,
And many a warrior bronzed and bold.
For her face was as fair as a beautiful dream,
And her voice like the song of the mountain stream;
And her eyes like the stars when they glow and gleam
Through the somber pines of the nor'land wold,
When the winds of winter are keen and cold.

Mah-pí-ya Dú-ta ^[12], the tall Red Cloud,
A hunter swift and a warrior proud,
With many a scar and many a feather,
Was a suitor bold and a lover fond.
Long had he courted Wiwâstè's father,

Long had he sued for the maiden's hand.
Aye, brave and proud was the tall Red Cloud,
A peerless son of a giant race,
And the eyes of the panther were set in his face:
He strode like a stag, and he stood like a pine;
Ten feathers he wore of the great *Wanmdeè*; ^[13]
With crimsoned quills of the porcupine
His leggins were worked to his brawny knee.
The bow he bent was a giant's bow;
The swift, red elk could he overtake,
And the necklace that girdled his brawny neck
Was the polished claws of the great *Mató* ^[14]
He grappled and slew in the northern snow.
Wiwâstè looked on the warrior tall;
She saw he was brawny and brave and great,
But the eyes of the panther she could but hate,
And a brave *Hóhè* ^[15] loved she better than all.
Loved was *Mahpíya* by *Hârpstinà*
But the warrior she never could charm or draw;
And bitter indeed was her secret hate
For the maiden she reckoned so fortunate.