

THE ARROWHEAD

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of, when swift messengers arrived bearing the intelligence that the waters were rising with redoubled fury, and craving a place of refuge for the fleeing nation. A council was held and it was agreed that the fugitives should be made welcome, since there was room and food to spare for all. Here my aged companion gave signs of deep seated woe. Rising to his feet he seized a handful of ashes and flung them upwards, uttering loud lamentations in his native tongue.

II

When the old chief's grief had subsided he resumed the narrative:

It was an evil day for my tribe he said: when the stranger entered upon our hitherto peaceful fields, they brought with them the fierce and warlike spirit which had ruled them in their former homes. For a few years they restrained themselves, but all too soon we found it

necessary to arm ourselves against the predatory hordes of newcomers. It was impossible to drive them back beyond the dividing ridge. The mighty water had arisen and laved the eastern base of the hills from which we had been wont to look down upon the homes of a mighty people. It would be too long to tell of the countless battles between the newcomers and those upon whom they had intruded. The dread demands of constant war left our fields neglected, and want and famine stared us in the face. Year by year our unwelcome guests encroached further and further upon that portion of our valley which we had reserved for ourselves, until in solemn council it was resolved to make one last desperate stand for our rights. In the turmoil of the times our sacrifices to the Great Spirit had been neglected, and there were not wanting those who, still clinging to the simple faith of the peaceful and happy days of our prosperity, reproached the people with their own sins. Through all these troublous times, intermarriages between the two had been unknown. Our women were virtuous and cared only for their household and domestic duties. Once indeed, the son of a leading chief of the newcomers had sought the hand of the fairest maiden of our nation, but her father, our leader in peace and war, had sternly refused and an understanding of the tribe had forbidden marriage with any of the hated usurpers.

At this point my old friend grew garrulous and went into a long disquisition about the utter impossibility of doing anything with a woman when she had made her mind up to marry; for it seems, according to the old man's account, that this young Indian Princess had regarded the suit of the lover above referred to quite formally and had made her mind up to marry him if any opportunity was offered. We shall see what came of it. The narrator resumed.

It was finally decided that a pitched battle should be fought, the result of which should determine which party should be masters of the situation; in short, who should be the hewers of wood and drawers of water for the other, for nothing else would satisfy the warlike but ungrateful fugitives from the East.

Here again my old friend branched off into a long disquisition upon the religious rites and ceremonies of his ancestors which would doubtless be interesting to students of Indian antiquities, but which does not concern the general reader further than to know that in times of great danger, the tribe from which he was descended, specially set apart and consecrated the most beautiful young maiden among them to seek the will and purpose of the Great Spirit, her recitations being received as immutable law. When the elders of the tribe had assembled for the purpose of the consecration, the maiden who had been selected, and who was none other than the one sought in marriage by the young

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