

E 99

.S3 S19





Day - yu - da - gont

A Poem

BY

JOHN WENTWORTH SANBORN, A. M.

AND

THE HEMLOCK-BOUGH HOUSE

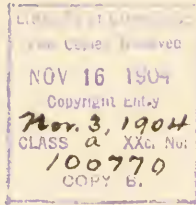
Seneca Indian Legends



FRIENDSHIP, N. Y.
JOHN W. SANBORN

1905

E 99
.53519



Copyright, 1904,
BY JOHN W. SANBORN.

All rights reserved.



Dedication

TO THE
SCOTTSVILLE N. Y. LITERARY SOCIETY
WHICH, FOR UPWARDS OF THIRTY YEARS
HAS STOOD FOR ALL THAT IS BEST
IN LITERATURE, HISTORY AND SCIENCE,
THIS WORK
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

Day - yu - da - gont

Day - yu - da - gant



WILD weird tale I've heard the Indians tell,
Of Day-yu-da-gont and her magic spell.

"Brilliant and sparkling" her name signifies—
True index of her character and eyes.
As crystal water flashes forth the light
As diamond stars illumine the brow of
Night;

So Day-yu-da-gont by her matchless grace,
Shed lustrous glory on her dusky race.

An old man and his nephew dwelt together;
And fished and hunted in all sorts of weather.

One morn their traps were full. The fish and game
They marveled at! Some witch had made them
tame.

Fat steak of bears, plump birds, rich furs and deer,
In heaps before the wigwam, brought good cheer.

While resting from their toil, a sudden cry,
As of a child in great distress hard by,

Astonished them! Against an old oak tree,
They found, on searching, something strange
to see—



A baby girl! with eyes as bright as stars,
Enwrapped in curling bark, with twigs for bars!
She smiled, and moved the nephew's tender heart.
"I'll care for you," he said, "and share a part
"Of all my game with you, till you are grown."
He'd not have promised this if he had known
His uncle's mind. He took the baby up,
And hurried to the wigwam, helped her sup
From out his ladle; stirred the dying fire.
In came the uncle.—All his slumbering ire
Awoke! "My nephew, drive her out!" In vain
The nephew pleaded, "She will help us gain
An easier living; she will hoe the maize,
Supply our fire"—"My nephew, if she stays
"I'll kill her! Get her out! tell her to go!"
At daylight she had gone. In feathery snow
She left a woman's track. By night she'd blown,
Like opening flower, to womanhood, and flown.
"Well, uncle, she has gone, and let her go!
What bad luck she'd have made us we don't know."
She sang a song, and all the beasts and birds
Went after her, charmed by her magic words.
The whole creation flocked where'er she sang;
With not a wild bird's note the forest rang.
No squirrel chattered; not a creature stayed;
Untimely twilight fell with deep'ning shade.



With empty traps the two were left alone,
For heartlessness to Day-yu-da-gont shown.
They starved and died, and wild birds picked
their bones,
And He-no strung a necklace of their groans.



“Now I’ll become a babe again and cry,
And capture me a husband by and by.”
Thus Day-yu-da-gont mused. Against a tree
She leaned her cradle where no eye could see.
A trapper and his nephew in those parts
There chanced to live; on them she tried her arts.
Homeward at th’ end of a laborious day,
With bursting packs they slowly made their way.
While resting from their toil, a sudden cry,
As of a child in great distress hard by,
Astonished them. Against a hemlock tree
They found, on searching, something strange
to see—

A baby girl, with eyes as bright as stars,
Enwrapped in curling bark with twigs for bars.
She smiled, and touched and melted both their
hearts;
This time successful with her magic arts.
The uncle whispered, “Nephew, we shall see
Good luck; we’ll hunt and fish, and trap, and she



He-no was the Indian Spirit who handled the thunder-bolts and brought the storms.

Will plant our maize, prepare our wood and meat,
Our soup, parched corn, and all things good to eat.

We'll shelter her, and shield her from the storm,
Wrap her in choicest furs to keep her warm."

So planned they, while the soup—a savory lot—
The nephew ladled out, now steaming hot.

But first they fed the babe. The Indians' guest
Is served alone, and then they feed the rest.

Next morning when the wigwam floor was swept,
The nephew, eager, to the cradle crept,—

And lo! no babe! but full-grown woman there!
Of fascinating grace, and queenly air.

"My nephew, she's your wife! thus Indians wed;
I'm very glad she's come," the uncle said.

The nephew was delighted; so was she.

"In this arrangement we can all agree."

While both the men were looking to their traps,
With white stone from her pack she gave
sharp raps

On massive trees, and, with a magic sweep,
Piled fire-wood up in one broad pond'rous heap!

The men returned, but every trap was lean.
All day they hunted, but no game was seen.

They neared the wigwam. Day-yu-da-gont sang,
And all the forest with the music rang.



The birds were moved ; they chirped. The eagles
screamed.

With moles and squirrels swift the woodpile teem'd.

She louder sang, and sweeter than before ;

A whirl of wings, and universal roar

Of beasts throughout the forest, hurrying near,

Fell doubtfully upon the uncle's ear.

"Now shoot the game as far as you can see,"

Said Day-yu-da-gont, "ere the beasts shall flee."

They plied their arrows thick and fast as hail.

They chased the game through many a
well-worn trail.

The crowded traps that met their wondering gaze.

For Day-yu-da-gont filled their mouths with praise.

They had enough. At once she ceased her song.

And into wild, dark solitudes, the throng

Of birds and beasts each took their several way.

Thus Day-yu-da-gont gave reward that day.

For kindly treatment to a helpless child,

Out in the forest desolate and wild.

As crystal water flashes back the light,

As diamond stars illumine the brow of Night.

So Day-yu-da-gont, by her matchless grace,

Shed lustrous glory on her dusky race.



The Hemlock-Bough House

A Legend

The Hemlock-Bough House



EXCLUDED from the rest of the tribe, a man and his wife lived in a house of hemlock boughs. He was a good hunter and they had plenty of meat. Skins of wild animals lined the house, and made it very warm. At length a boy was born to them, and they were pleased. In the summer time the woman planted a few hills of corn in cleared spaces in the wood, and made their bread. When the boy was twenty-four moons old, (two years) a girl was born. A hundred moons passed by, and, one morning after the man had gone to hunt, the woman put on her best clothes, took an axe and head-strap and went away, telling the children to stay in the wigwam until she returned. She repeated these strange actions every day. She brought no wood home, and the children wondered. At last she beat the children as she started out, and hurt them very much.

The father found them crying one night, and was much grieved when he learned the truth. Next morning he hid in the underbrush and watched. He saw her pound the children, and hurry away dressed in her best clothes. She did not know he was following her. She stopped near a large tree; it was a black ash. She tapped gently on the tree.

The sound was like a bird's voice. He heard the warble of a bird as she continued to strike the tree.

Like a flash of light, a man came and sat down beside her. The husband drew an arrow and muttered, "I will put an end to their sparking," and "whiz" flew the arrow like a lightning gleam, passing between them. The strange man disappeared in the shape of an owl. The woman then saw her husband. She seized a club and struck him, and left him for dead. She hurried home. The boy sat down on a log, and she put the girl in his lap, and set fire to the hemlock-bough house. She scattered a handful of ashes, and said, "I command you to become snow." It snowed until it reached the tree-tops. The snow covered the children and buried her husband who was not dead but stunned.

The woman left, never again to return. Soon the father came home. He cried, "Poor children! my poor children! this is our fate. I will go after your mother. Stay here, and your dog will protect you. Be kind to the dog. Never leave your sister."

The father went away. The children cried. They did not know where the dog was, but soon the snow lifted near them in a broken heap. The dog was there, awaking from sleep. He stretched himself, and that made the snow lift and break. He beckoned to the children by wagging his tail and whining. They followed him, and lo! a warm house with a bright fire! Food in plenty was in the house, with wooden bowls and ladles. They feasted, but always fed the dog first. In three days it ceased snowing. The dog became uneasy. They

disliked to go, but they obeyed the dog. There were nice playthings in the house. The boy tied them up, and tried to carry them and his sister, but he could not. The dog shook the bundle to pieces, and they knew he was unwilling to take the things. The snow had fallen over only a small space. In a few days it disappeared. The dog led them. They went a long way, and when weary they reached a bark house. It seemed to be the same house they had left in the morning, but it was not the same spot. Food was on the table. They knew not who prepared it. Bows and arrows of all kinds were there. The next day they hurried away taking bows and arrows with them. Past midday they saw a flock of wild turkeys. There was one white one, and the girl wanted it, so the boy chased the turkeys. The dog was far ahead now. The white turkey hid in the bushes. The boy plunged in after it, and caught it, but heard his sister scream. A bear was running off with her. The bear outran the dog. Soon the boy was left alone, and his father's command "never leave your sister" came to his mind, and made him very sad. He wished he might die. Tramping on he came to a river. "Here I shall end my life." He saw a large tree leaning over the water. He climbed it. He then jumped into the river. There were rocks at the river-bottom, and he climbed over them, but did not succeed in drowning himself.

"What is the reason I cannot die!"

He walked along the bottom of the river out into a great lake. There were hills and queerly-shaped bushes, and bright-eyed fish. He met a

hideous fish-monster with an enormous wide-open mouth, and into this mouth he walked, and down the monster's throat, saying, "Now I shall surely die, and I am glad."

At the outlet of the lake lived two women who were poor. They had built a raceway down which the water rushed. They had driven in stakes a few inches apart for catching fish, and they lived on the fish caught in these stakes. They called this place Gah-ah-oh, "the fish-catch."

One morning they found a large fish, and were overjoyed. They dragged him to dry land, and when they cut him open, they were scared to find a boy! They aroused him. He opened his eyes and spoke. They were so glad he was alive that they forgot the fish, and carried the boy to their home. "How came you in the fish?" they asked, and he told them the whole affair.

"We heard the dog bark two moons ago. He ran not far away," they said.

The boy cried, but the women were very kind and soon he felt at home. They found out that he had great power over wild animals, that he had only to shoot an arrow, and say the word, and a bear or deer would fall at any place he wished. He at once shot a bear; it was the first bear's meat they had tasted in many hundred moons. They said, "We have adopted you. Do not go beyond our domain."

He thought, "What can be the reason they are always telling me not to go far! I will find out." He wandered a long distance next day, and saw a coil of smoke rising. Creeping up cautiously, he

came upon a house. Peering through a crack, he saw an old man, wrinkled and dried up. The old man was a famous and dreaded witch. He had destroyed many people. In harsh tones he cried out, "Come in! Come in! I have a nice game I always play with folks. If my visitors beat me—but they never do—I tell them they may take off my head; but I always beat them, and take off their heads."

"That is fair," said the boy.

The old witch took a wooden bowl and put six cherry-pits in it. These pits were rubbed smooth on one side and burned black on the other.

"You are a boy and I will let you begin," said the old witch.

He did not know the boy, but he soon found that he had great power, and he played right on. Every time he shook the cherry stones the smooth sides turned up and he won. The old witch was mad, and seized the bowl, and said, "Now I will play," but the boy said, "No; it is not your turn." At last, he let the old man play, but his charm was broken, and he had poor luck; the black sides came up for him every play, and he lost the game. The boy took his head off, and that was the end of the old witch.

The women missed the boy. When he returned and told what he had done, they said, "We are glad; this witch has destroyed all of our family. We feared he would kill you, and that is the reason we cautioned you not to go far away."

One day there came a loud knock at their wigwam door. Whenever a contest was to take place,

the custom was for a messenger to go about and knock at every wigwam door. The present messenger had come to announce a wedding. He said "I invite everybody to great wedding. O-no-ate will marry in six days. Every man bring bows and arrows." Now, O-no-ate was the name of this boy's own mother who had deserted him and tried to kill his father. The boy asked the women if he might go. They consented.

Each man was to shoot arrows at a large bird at the top of a pole, and the one that hit the bird was to become the husband of O-no-ate.

The boy went. The women gave him a cloak made of a skin, on either shoulder of which there was a human face, and there were human arms, and in the hands were war-clubs for the protection of the wearer.

"Go," said the women, "and be the guest of your uncle Ta-do-oh-ho-kah,—*"man-of-the-wood-chuck-skin-skirt."*

In three days the wedding would come off. Being a swift runner, he reached his uncle's the next morning at daylight.

"My nephew, I am glad to see you. Let me instruct you. When you reach the village of O-no-ate, turn from the main trail, and follow the foot-path. It will bring you to the wigwam of a poor woman who lives there with her grandchildren. Call her grandmother. There are many things set to entice the traveler on the way. Do not stop until you reach the grandmother's wigwam."

He promised. Voices tempted him on the way, but he remembered how he disobeyed his father,

and lost his sister, and on he went rapidly.

Great numbers were flocking to the wedding. He found the old woman's house. Before going in, he shot an arrow, and commanded it to bring a deer to the poor woman's door, and it did so. He went in.

"Grandmother, I have come to be your guest through the wedding."

"It is too bad, my grandson, but we have nothing good to eat"—and just then a fine deer fell dead at the door. The grandmother was happy, for there was plenty now. She went to the lodges at daylight, and returned, saying that the men had already begun to shoot at the bird, and some were tasting the soup which O-no-ate had prepared.

"Wait till the evening twilight," said the grandmother; I know all about cruel O-no-ate, how she has treated your father, and sister, and you. Your father now lies in the dust at one end of the council-house. O-no-ate has driven a sharp hickory stick down his spinal column, and it produces a hard cough, and your sister hangs by a hook over the fire-place, just far enough above the fire not to be burned by the flames, but everybody punches the fire, and the sparks fly up around her, and she screams. The dog is also there. He, too, is badly burned. At the other end of the same room sits cruel O-no-ate in great style, waiting for some man to shoot the bird, and claim her for his wife."

At twilight the young man started. Near the council-house he changed into a very old man. It appeared that he could scarcely walk. He entered the council-house. It was filled with people.

R D 1.48 MB

All gazed at the feeble old man, and some objected to his entering. "He is too old to come here," they said.

Others cried, "Let him go through. Make way!" and they prevailed.

In a moment he saw that what the grandmother said was true. His heart was heavy at the sight.

He went out, changed back to a young man, and prepared his arrows. Back to the grandmother's wigwam he hastened, and through the opening where the smoke went out, he shot an arrow, and hit the bird. None saw who shot the arrow, but all saw that the bird was hurt. It flew a long way, and fell dead. Many claimed the deadly arrow, but none could withdraw it; only the rightful owner could do that.

Everybody's attention was drawn to the bird. The young man hurried to his father and sister. He drew out the hickory from his father's spine, and healed his wounds, released his sister, and the dog, and cured their burns, and they departed from the council-house. He set fire to the house, and O-no-ate's head grew hot, her brain exploded, and the remnant of it popped out and became the hooting owl, and whenever the owl is heard to hoot, the cruelty of the faithless woman comes to mind, as a warning to others. The father, sister, and the dog went with the boy to the home of the women near the lake. They were glad.

"And now," said the young man, "let my father marry one of you, and I will marry the younger." This was very pleasing to them all. They lived long, and happily, and died in peace.

NA-HO! "I am done."



Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing Agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date:



PRESERVATION TECHNOLOGIES, LP.
111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Twp., PA 16096
(412) 779-2111

1997



DOBBS BROS.
LIBRARY BINDING

ST. AUGUSTINE

FLA.

32084



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 010 524 264 5

