

HISTORY

OF THE

OTTAWA AND CHIPPEWA INDIANS

OF MICHIGAN;

A GRAMMAR OF THEIR LANGUAGE,

AND PERSONAL AND FAMILY HISTORY OF THE AUTHOR,

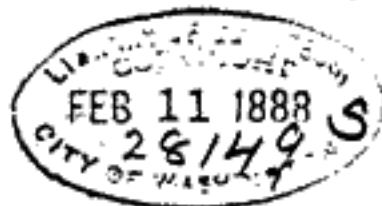
BY ANDREW J. BLACKBIRD,

LATE U. S. INTERPRETER, HARBOR SPRINGS, EMMET CO., MICH.

YPSILANTI, MICH.:

THE YPSILANTIAN JOB PRINTING HOUSE.

1887.



It may be said, this is not true; it is a mistake. We have known several cases of murders among the Ottawas and Chippewas. I admit it to be true, that there have been cases of murders among the Ottawas and Chippewas since the white people knew them. But these cases of murders occurred some time after they came in contact with the white races in their country; but I am speaking now of the primitive condition of Indians, particularly of the Ottawas and Chippewas, and I believe most of those cases of murders were brought on through the bad influence of white men, by introducing into the tribes this great destroyer of mankind, soul and body, intoxicating liquors! Yet, during sixty years of my existence among the Ottawas and Chippewas, I have never witnessed one case of murder of this kind, but I heard there were a few cases in other parts of the country, when in their fury from the influence of intoxicating liquors.

There was one case of sober murder happened about fifty years ago at Arbor Croche, where one young man disposed of his lover by killing, which no Indian ever knew the actual cause of. He was arrested and committed to the Council and tried according to the Indian style; and after a long council, or trial, it was determined the murderer should be banished from the tribe. Therefore, he was banished. Also, about this time, one case of sober murder transpired among the Chippewas of Sault Ste. Marie, committed by one of the young Chippewas whose name was Wau-bau-ne-me-kee (White-thunder), who might have been released if he had been properly tried and impartial judgment exercised over the case, but we believe it was not. This Indian killed a white man, when he was perfectly sober, by stabbing. He was arrested, of course, and tried and sentenced to be hung at the Island of Mackinac. I distinctly remember the time. This poor Indian was very happy when he was about to be hung on the gallows. He told the people that he was very happy to die, for he felt that he was innocent. He did not deny killing the man, but he thought he was justifiable in the sight of the

Great Spirit, as such wicked monsters ought to be killed from off the earth; as this white man came to the Indian's wigwam in the dead of night, and dragged the mother of his children from his very bosom for licentious purpose. He remonstrated, but his remonstrances were not heeded, as this ruffian was encouraged by others who stood around his wigwam, and ready to fall upon this poor Indian and help their fellow-ruffian; and he therefore stabbed the principal party, in defence of his beloved wife, for which cause the white man died. If an Indian should go to the white man's house and commit that crime, he would be killed; and what man is there who would say that is too bad, this Indian to be killed in that manner? But every man will say amen, only he ought to have been tortured before he was killed; and let the man who killed this bad and wicked Indian be rewarded! This is what would be the result if the Indian would have done the same thing as this white man did.

The Ottawas and Chippewas were quite virtuous in their primitive state, as there were no illegitimate children reported in our old traditions. But very lately this evil came to exist among the Ottawas—so lately that the second case among the Ottawas of Arbor Croche is yet living. And from that time this evil came to be quite frequent, for immorality has been introduced among these people by evil white persons who bring their vices into the tribes.

In the former times or before the Indians were christianized, when a young man came to be a fit age to get married, he did not trouble himself about what girl he should have for his wife; but the parents of the young man did this part of the business. When the parents thought best that their son should be separated from their family by marriage, it was their business to decide what woman their son should have as his wife; and after selecting some particular girl among their neighbors, they would make up quite large package of presents and then go to the parents of the girl and demand the daughter for their son's wife,