

Among these may be mentioned the Ojibway, who are at the present day, the most numerous and important tribe of the formerly wide extended Algie family of tribes. They occupy the area of Lake Superior and the sources of the Mississippi, and as a general fact, they still live in the ways of their ancestors. Even among these, a change is so rapidly taking place, caused by a close contact with the white race, that ten years hence it will be too late to save the traditions of their forefathers from total oblivion. And even now, it is with great difficulty that genuine information can be obtained of them. Their aged men are fast falling into their graves, and they carry with them the records of the past history of their people; they are the initiators of the grand rite of religious belief which they believe the Great Spirit has granted to his red children to secure them long life on earth, and life hereafter; and in the bosoms of these old men are locked up the original causes and secrets of this, their most ancient belief.

The writer of the following pages was born, and has passed his lifetime, among the Ojibways of Lake Superior and the Upper Mississippi. His ancestors on the maternal side, have been in close connection with this tribe for the past one hundred and fifty years. Speaking their language perfectly, and connected with them through the strong ties of blood, he has ever felt a deep interest in their welfare and fate, and has deemed it a duty to save their traditions from oblivion, and to collect every fact concerning them, which the advantages he possesses have enabled him to procure.

The following pages are the result of a portion of his researches; the information and facts contained therein have been obtained during the course of several years of inquiry, and great care has been taken that nothing but the truth and actual fact should be presented to the reader.