The Red Man's Greeting.

by Chief Pokagon.

"1492."

"1892."

LANDING OF COLUMBUS
To the memory of
William Penn, Roger Williams,
the late lamented
Helen Hunt Jackson,
and many others now in Heaven,
Who conceived that Noble spirit of Justice
Which recognizes the Brotherhood of the Red Man,
and to Emma C. Sickels, and all others
now living defenders of our race.
I most gratefully dedicate this tribute of the forest.

Chief Pokagon.
By The Author.

My object in publishing the "Red Men's Greetings" on the bark of this white birch tree, is out of loyalty to my own people, and gratitude to the Great Spirit, who in His wisdom provided for our use for untold generations, this most remarkable tree, with manifold bark used by us instead of paper, being of greater value to us, as it could not be injured by sun or water.

Out of the bark of this wonderful tree were made hats, caps and dresses for domestic use, while our maidens tied their hair in the kind that sealed their marriage vows; wigwams were made of it, as well as large canoes that carried the violent storms on lake and sea; it was also used for light and fuel for our councils and spirit dances.

Originally the shores of our northern lakes and streams were fringed with it and evergreen, and the white charmingly contrasted with the green mirrored from the water was indeed beautiful, but like the red man this tree is vanishing from our forests.

"It is low for us, our day is over;
Our fires are out from shore to shore;
No more for us the wild deer bounds;
The plow is on our hunting grounds.
The pale man's ax rings through our woods;
The pale man's sail shimmers o'er our pools;
The pleasant springs are empty;
Our children—look by prayer, implored,
Beyond the mountains of the west—
Our children go—to die."
THE RED MAN'S GREETING.

BY SIMON POXAGON
Potawatomi Chief.

"Shall not one line lament our forest race,
For you struck out from wild creation's face
Freedom — the selfsame freedom you adore,
Raise us defend our violated shore."

In behalf of my people, the American Indians, I hereby declare to you, the pale-faced race that has usurped our lands and homes, that we have no spirit to celebrate with you the great Columbian Fair now being held in this Chicago city, the wonder of the world.

No; sooner would we hold high day-day over the graves of our departed fathers, than to celebrate our own funeral, the discovery of America. And while you who are strangers, and you who live here, bring the offerings of the
handiwork of your own lands, and your hearts in admiration rejoice over the beauty and grandeur of this young republic, and you say, "Behold the wonders wrought by our children in this foreign land," do not forget that this success has been at the sacrifice of our homes and a once happy race.

Where these great Columbian show-buildings stretch skyward, and where stands this "Queen City of the West," once stood the red man's wigwam; here met their old men, young men, and maidens; here placed their councils fires. But now the eagle's eye can find no trace of them. Here was the center of their wide-spread hunting grounds; stretching far eastward, and to the great salt Gulf southward, and to the lofty Rocky Mountain chain westward; and all about and beyond the Great Lakes northward roamed vast herds of buffalo that no man could number, white moose, deer, elk, and all were found from deer to octopus, foxes, fowls, and geese innumerable; men moved in great clouds through the air, while swarms of streams, lakes, and seas close to those. All were provided by the Great Spirit for our use; we destroyed none except for food and dress; had plenty and were content, and happy.

But alas! the pale-faces came by chance to our shores, many times very nearly and hungry. We numbered and fed them. We fed the ravenous that were soon to pluck out our eyes, and the eyes of our children, for so sooner had the man reached the Old World that a new continent had been found, peoples

with another race of men, than, locust-like, they swarmed on all our coasts; and, like the carrier cranes in spring, that in circles wheel and clamor long and loud, and will not cease until they find and feast upon the dead, so these strangers from the East long circuits made, and turkey-like they gobbled in our ears, "Give us gold, give us gold;" "Where find you gold? Where find you gold?"

We gave for promises and "gawgaws" all the gold we had, and showed them where to dig for more; to repay us, they robbed our homes of fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters; some were forced across the sea for slaves in Spain, while multitudes were dragged into the mines to dig for gold, and held in slavery there until all who escaped not, died under the cruel task-master. It finally passed into their history that, "The life of the cruel task-master. It finally passed into their history that, "The man of the West, unlike the black man of the East, will die before he'll a slave." Our hearts were crushed by such base ingratitude; and, as the United States has now decreed, "No Californian shall land upon our shores," so we then felt that no such barbarians as they, should land on ours.

In those days that tried our fathers' souls, tradition says: "A crippled, grey-haired sire told his tribe that in the visions of the night he was lifted high above the earth, and in great wonder beheld a vast spiderweb spread out over the land from the Atlantic Ocean toward the setting sun. Its net-work was
made of rods of iron; along its lines in all directions rushed, monstrous spiders, greater in size, and larger far than any beast of earth, clad in brass and iron, dragging after them long rows of wagons with families therein, outstripping in their course the flight of birds that fled before them. Hissing from their nostrils came forth fire and smoke, striking terror to both fowl and beast. The red men hid themselves in fear, or fled away, while the white men trained these monsters for the war path, as warriors for battle."

The old man who saw this vision claimed it meant that the Indian race would surely pass away before the pale-faced strangers. He died a martyr to his belief. Centuries have passed since that time, and we now behold the world as it is a mirror, the present network of railroads and the monstrous engines that travel along, and hissing steam, with cars attached, as they go sweeping through the land.

[...]

flame — were shot for love of power to kill alone, and left to spoil upon the plains. Their bleaching bones now scattered far and near, in shame declare the wanton cruelty of pale-faced men. The room unsatisfied on land swept our lakes and streams, while before its clouds of books, nets, and glistening spears the fish vanished from our waters like the morning dew before the rising sun. Thus our inheritance was cut off, and we were driven and scattered as sheep before the wolves.

Nor was this all. They brought among us fatal diseases our fathers knew not of; our medicine-men tried in vain to check the deadly plague; but they themselves died, and our people fell as fall the leaves before the autumn's blast. To be just, we must acknowledge there were some good men among these strangers, who gave their lives for ours, and in great kindness taught us as the revealed will of the Great Spirit through his Son Jesus, the mediator between God and man. But while we were being taught to love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, and strength, and our neighbors as ourselves, and our children were taught to lip, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name," had men of the same race, whom we thought of the same belief, shocked our faith in the revealed will of the Father, as they came among us with bitter oaths upon their lips, something we had never heard before, and cups of "fire-water" in their hands, something we had never seen before.
They pressed the sparkling glasses to our lips and said, "Drink, and you will be happy!" We drank thereof, we and our children, but also like the serpent that charmed to kill, the drink—habit called all the heart—strings of its victims, shocking unto death, friendship, love, honor, manhood—all that makes men good and noble; crushing us all ambition, and leaving nothing but a culprit vagabond in the place of a man.

Now as we have been taught to believe that our first parents ate of the forbidden fruit, and fell, so we are fully believe that this fire-water is the hard-crat of the white man’s devil, unnoticed from the root of that tree that brought death and destruction into the world, and all our woes. The arrow, the scalping-knife, and the tomahawk and the war-whoop were powerful, compared with it; they were used in our days but the accursed drink came like a serpent in the form of a dove. Many of our people perished of it without mistrust, as children pluck the flowers and clutch a serpent in their grasp; only when they feel the sting, they let the flowers fall. But Nature’s children had no such power; for when the viper’s fangs they felt, they only hugged the reptile the more closely to their bosoms, while friends before them stood pleading with prayers and tears that they would let the deadly serpent drop. But all in vain. Although they promised to do, yet with laughing grin and steps uncertain like the fool, they still more frequently guzzled down this hellish

drug. Finally, conscience ceased to give alarm, and led by deep despair to life’s last brink, and goded by demons on every side, they cursed themselves, they cursed their friends, they cursed their buggar babes and wives, they cursed their God, and died.

You say of us that we are treacherous, vindictive, and cruel; in answer to the charge, we declare to all the world with our hands uplifted before high Heaven, that before the white man came among us we were kind, outspoke, and forgiving. Our real character has been misunderstood because we have resented the breaking of treaties made with the United States, as we honestly understood them. The few of our children who were permitted to attend schools, in great pride tell that the same God who in the days of old commercials William Penn, a Quaker, and (signed) James, made treaties with the nine tribes of Indians, and that neither he nor they ever broke them; and further that during seventy years, while Pennsylvania was controlled by the Quakers, not a drop of blood was shed nor a war whoop sounded by our people. Your own historians, and our traditions, show that for nearly two hundred years, different Eastern powers were striving for the mastery in the new world, and that our people were permitted by the different factions to take the war-path, being generally led by white men who had been discharged from prisons for crimes committed in the Old World.
Read the following, left on record by Peter Martyr, who visited our forefathers in the day of Columbus.

"It is certain that the land among these people is as common as the sun and water, and that mine and thine, the seed of all misery, have no place with them. They are content with so little, that in so large a country they have rather a superfluity than a scarcity; so that they seem to live in the golden world without labor. In open gardens not intersected with dykes, divided with hedges, or defended with walls. They dwell truly one with another, without laws, without books, without judges. They take him for an evil and mishapen man, who takes pleasure in doing hurt to another, and albeit they delight not in superstitions, yet they make provision for the increase of such roots where they make bread, content with such simple diet where health is preserved, and disease avoided.

Your own histories show that Columbus on his first visit to our shores, in a message to the king and queen of Spain, paid our forefathers this beautiful tribute:

"They are living, innocent people; so gentle in all things that I swear to your majesty there is not in the world a better race or a more delightful country. They love their neighbors of themselves, and their cattle is as sweet and gentle, accompanied with smiles and thoughts as handsome, yet dead men are devoured and plundered.

But a few years passed away, and your historians felt to be pained with shame, the following fact:

"On the islands of the Atlantic coast and in the populous empire of Mexico and Peru, the Spaniards, through presence of friendship and religion, gained audience with chiefs and

 Kings, their families and attendants. They were received with great kindness and courtesy but in return they most treacherously seized and bound in chains the unsuspecting natives; and as a reason for their rascality, demanded large sums of gold which were soon given by their subjects. But instead of granting them freedom as promised, they were put to death in most shocking manner. Their subjects were then hunted down, like wild beasts, with hounds, robbed and enslaved; while under pretext to convert them to Christianity, the race, the sources, and the fames were used. Some were burned alive in their thickets and fasting for refusing to work the mines as slaves.

Tradition says these acts of base ingratitude were communicated from tribe to tribe throughout the continent, and that a universal war as one voice went up from all the tribes of the unbroken wilderness: "We must hunt back these strangers from our shores before they seize our lands and homes, our slavery and death are ours."

Reader, pause here, close your eyes, shut out from your heart all prejudice against our race, and honestly consider the above records penned by the pale-faced historians centuries ago; and tell us in the name of eternal truth, and by all that is sacred and dear to mankind, was there ever a people without the slightest reason of offense, more treacherously imposed and scourged than we have been? And tell us, have crime, despotism, violence, and slavery ever been dealt out in a more wicked manner to crush our life and liberty; or was ever a people more mortally offended than our forefathers were?
Almighty Spirit of humanity, let thy arms of compassion embrace and shield us from the charge of treachery, vindictiveness, and cruelty, and save us from further oppression! And may the great chief of the United States appoint no more broken-down or disappointed politicians as agents to deal with us, but may he select good men that are tried and true, men who fear not to do the right. This is our prayer. What would remain for us if we were not allowed to pray? All else we acknowledge to be in the hands of this great republic.

It is clear that for years after the discovery of this country, we stood before the coming strangers as a block of marble before the sculptor, ready to be shaped into a statue of grace and beauty; but in their greed for gold, the block was hacked to pieces and destroyed. Child-like we trusted in them with all our hearts; and as the young nestling while yet blind, swallows each morsel given by the parent bird, so we drank in all they said. They showed us the compass that guided them across the treacherous deep, and as its needle swung to and fro only resting to the north, we looked upon it as a thing of life from the eternal world. We could not understand the lightning and thunder of their guns, believing they were weapons of the gods; nor could we fathom their wisdom in knowing and telling us the exact time in which the

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sun or moon should be darkened; hence we looked upon them as divine; we revered them—yes, we trusted in them, as infants trust in the arms of their mother.

But again and again was our confidence betrayed, until we were compelled to know that greed for gold was all the balance-wheel they had. The remnant of the bears are now wild and keep beyond the arrow's reach, the fish fly high in air, the fish hide themselves in deep waters. We have been driven from the homes of our childhood and from the burial places of our kindred and friends, and scattered far westward into desert places, where multitudes have died from homesickness, cold, and hunger, and are suffering and dying still for want of food and blankets.

As the hunted deer close chased all day long, when night comes on, weary and tired, lies down to rest, mourning for companions of the morning herd, all scattered, dead, and gone, so we through weary years have tried to find some place to safely rest. But all in vain! Our throbbing hearts unceasing say, "The howls are howling on our tracks." Our sad history has been told by weeping parents to their children from generation to generation; and as the fear of the fox in the duckling is hatched, so the wrongs we have suffered are transmitted to our children, and they look upon the white man with
distrust as soon as they are born. Hence our worst acts of cruelty should be viewed by all the world, with Christian charity, as being but the echo of bad treatment dealt out to us.

Therefore we pray our critics everywhere to be not like the thoughtless boy who condemns the toiling bees wherever found, as vindicative and cruel, because in robbing their homes he once reaped the poisoned dart that nature gave for their defense. Our strongest defense against the onward marching hordes, we fully realize, is as useless as the struggles of a lamb borne high in air, pierced to its heart, in the talons of an eagle.

We never shall be happy here any more; we go into the faces of our little ones, for smiles of infancy to please, and into the faces of our young men and maidens, for joys of youth in their advancing age, but alas! instead of smiles of joy we find but looks of sadness there. Then we fully realize in the anguish of our souls that their young and tender hearts, in keenest sympathy with ours, have drank in the sorrows we have felt, and their sad faces reflect it back to us again. No rainbow of promise spans the dark cloud of our afflictions; no cheering hopes are painted on our midnight sky. We only stand with folded arms and watch and wait to see the future deal with us no better than the past. No cheer of sympathy is given us; but in answer to our complaints we are told the triumphal march of the Eastern race westward is by

the unalterable decree of nature, termed by them "the survival of the fittest." And so we stand as upon the seashore, under hand and foot, while the incoming tide of the great ocean of civilization rises slowly to overwhelm us.

But a few more generations and the last chord of the forest will have passed into the world beyond—into that kingdom where Tche-ban-you-boyu, the Great Spirit, dwelleth, who loveth justice and mercy, and hateth evil; who has declared the "fittest" in his kingdom shall be those alone that hear and aid his children when they cry, and that love him and keep his commandments. In that kingdom many of our people in faith believe he will summon the pale-faced spirits to take position on his left, and the red spirits upon his right, and that he will say, "Sons and daughters of the forest, your prayers for deliverance from the iron heel of oppression through centuries past are recorded in this book now open before me, made from the bark of the white birch, a tree under which for generations past you have mourned and wept. On its pages silently has been recorded your sad history. It has touched my heart with pity and I will have compassion."

Then turning to his left he will say, "Sons and daughters of the East, all hear and give heed unto my words. While on earth I did great and marvelous things for you—I gave my only Son, who declared unto you my will,
and as you had freely received, to so freely give, and declare the gospel unto all people. A few of you have kept the faith; and through opposition and great tribulation have labored hard and diligently for the redemption of man kind regardless of race or color. To all such I now give divine pow'r to fly on lightning wings throughout the universe. Now, therefore, listen; and when the great drum beats, let all try their pow'r to fly. Only those can rise who acted well their part on earth to redeem and save the fallen.

The drum will be sounded, and that innumerable multitude will appear like some vast sea of wounded kings struggling in the air. We shall behold it, and shall hear their fluttering as the rumbling of an earthquake, and to our surprise shall see but a scattering few in triumph rise, and hear their songs re echo through the vault of heaven as they sing: “Glorify to the highest who hath redeemed and saved us.”

Then the Great Spirit will speak with a voice of thunder to the remaining, shame-faced multitude: “there ye: it is through great mercy that you have been permitted to enter these happy hunting grounds. Therefore I charge you in presence of those red men that you are guilty of having tyrannized over them in many and strange ways. I find you guilty of having made wanton wholesale butchery of their game, and fish; I find you guilty of using tobacco, a poisonous weed made only to kill parasites on plants and lice on men and beasts. You found it with the red men, who used it only in smoking the pipe of peace, to confirm their contracts, in place of a seal. But you multiplied its use, not only in smoking, but in chewing, snuffing, thus forming unhealthy, filthy habits, and by cigarettes, the abomination of abominations, learned little children to hunger and thirst after the father and mother of paity and cancers.”

“I find you guilty of tagging after the pay agents sent out by the great chief of the United States, among the Indians, to pay off their birth-right claims to home, and liberty, and native lands, and then sneaking about their agencies by deceit and trickery, cheating and robbing them of their money and goods, thus leaving them poor and naked. I also find you guilty of following the trail of Christian missionaries into the wilderness among the natives, and when they had set up my altars, and the great work of redemption had just begun, and some in faith believed, you then and there most wickedly set up the idol of man to call upon (the devil), and there stuck out your sign, SAMPLE ROOMS. You then dealt out to the sons of the forest, a most damnable drug, fully termed on earth by Christian women, ‘a beverage of hell,’ which destroyed both body and soul, taking therefore all their money and blankets, and scrambling not to take in pawn the Bibles given them by my servants.”
"Therefore know ye, this much-abused race shall enjoy the liberties of these happy hunting grounds, while I teach them my will, which you were in duty bound to do while on earth. But instead, you blocked up the highway that led to heaven, that the car of salvation might not pass over. Had you done your duty, they as well as you would now be rejoicing in glory with my saints with whom you fluttering, tried this dry in vain to rise. But now I say unto you, Stand back! you shall not tread upon the heels of my people, nor tyrannize over them any more. Neither shall you with gatling-gun or otherwise disturb or break up their prayer-meetings in camp any more. Neither shall you practice with weapons of lightning and thunder any more. Neither shall you use tobacco in any shape, way, or manner. Neither shall you touch, taste, handle, make, buy, or sell any thing that can intoxicate any more. And know ye, ye cannot buy out the law or shank by justice here; and if any attempt is made on your part to break these commandments, I shall forthwith grant these red men of America great power, and delegate them to cast you out of Paradise, and hurl you headlong through its outer gates into the endless abyss beneath — far beyond, where darkness meets with light, there to dwell, and thus shut you out from my presence and the presence of angels and the light of heaven forever and ever."

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"Is not the Red Man's wigwam home
As dear to him as costly dome?
Is not his lov'd one's smile as bright
As the dear one's of th' man that's white?"
Brief History of Simon Pokagon,
Pottawattamie Chief.

Simon Pokagon, author of the "Red Man's Columbian Greeting," published in a booklet made of the bark of the white birch tree, is 63 years old, and of pure Indian descent. He has a fair English education and has studied both Greek and Latin. He is the acknowledged chief by the U. S. of the "Pokagon Pottawattamie Band."

His father, Leopold Pokagon, was chief of the tribe 42 years, was present at Chicago in 1812 at the time of the massacre of Fort Dearborn. He made several important treaties with the U. S. The last one was made at Chicago in 1833, at which time 7000 Pottawattamies were present. By this treaty 20 million acres of land in northern Illinois and Wisconsin were ceded to the U. S. in consideration of about one million dollars, the most of which fell due in installments thereafter. He died in 1850.

His son, Simon Pokagon, visited Washington in 1861 to get if possible the money due his tribe from the U. S. by treaties made with his father. He was the first Indian to visit President Lincoln after his inauguration. In a letter written home to his people at the time of his visit is the following: "I have met the great chief, Abraham Lincoln. I think he is the tallest man I ever saw. He has a great and good heart, I saw it in his face and felt it in his hand-shaking. He talked with me as a father would talk to his son. He enquired all about our people; is glad we have built churches and school houses. He will help us all he can to get our payment. He instructed a clerk to introduce me to the commissioners on Indian affairs. He has a sad look in his face. I think he is troubled about the slave states. They have declared they do not want him for chief but want Jefferson Davis, a man that loves slavery and hates freedom."

He was assured by the commissioners that the amount due by treaties with his father should be paid within one year. Three years having passed without payment he again went to Washington in 1864, at which time he found it difficult to get a hearing before the commissioners on Indian affairs, owing to the great excitement connected with the Rebellion. Grant was thundering before Richmond for its final overthrow, while Sherman was making his grand march to the sea. He finally succeeded in gaining audience with the authorities, who excused the delay of payment on account of the war but again assured him that the payment would soon be made. Nothing, however, was paid until 1866, at which time $32,000.00 was received by his people. In 1874 he went to Washington the last time, met President Grant, smoked with him the pipe of peace, receiving thanks for the loyalty of his people and for the soldiers they had furnished during the war.

Again appearing before the commissioners he urgently pressed payment of the balance due the tribe. After much opposition, anxiety and years of labor he finally succeeded in 1883 in procuring through the court of claims a decree for $156,000.00. He is a fine interpreter, having interpreted over 3000 sermons at the time they were delivered, into his mother tongue. He is now acting as agent to procure children to attend the Lawrence Kansas Indian school, where he has one son and two grand-children. He has resided in Hartford, Michigan, ever since 1855. The first churches erected in the townships of Hartford and Silver Creek, Mich., were built by his people.

"I hereby certify I have known Simon Pokagon for 38 years, having during that time often met with his people in council to transact business for them connected with the U. S., and from such knowledge believe the above history is reliable."

C. H.Engle,
Hartford, Mich.

=Author of the=-
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