

CHILDREN'S PAGE

The following poem is written by a Scot, judging from his name. It was written during Confederation when Canada was born and published in 1867.

THE INDIAN

Now had the autumn day gone by,
And evening's yellow shade
Had wrapped the mountains and the hills,
And lengthen'd o'er the glade.
The honey-bee had sought her hive,
The bird her shelter'd nest,
And in the hollow valley's gloom
Both wind and wave had rest.

And to a cotter's hut that eve
There came an Indian chief;
And in his frame was weariness,
And in his face was grief.
The feather o'er his head that danced
Was weather-soil'd and rent;
And broken were his bow and spear,
And all his arrows spent.

And meek and humble was his speech;
He knew the white man's hand
Was turn'd against those wasted tribes,
Long scourged from the land.
He pray'd but for a simple draught
Of water from the well,
And a poor morsel of the food
That from his table fell.

He said that his old frame
Had toil'd a wide and weary way
O'er the sunny lakes and savage hills
And through the woods that day.
Yet when he saw they scoff'd his words,
He turn'd away in woe,
And cursed them not, but only mourn'd
That they should shame him so.

When many years had flown away,
That herdsman of the hill
Went out into the wilderness
The wolf and bear to kill -
To scatter the red deer, and slay
The panther in his lair,
And chase the rapid moose that ranged
The sunless forests there.

And soon his hounds lay dead with toil;
The deer were fierce and fleet;
And the prairie tigers kept aloof
When they heard his hostile feet.
No bread was in the desert place,
Nor crystal rivulet
To slake the torment of his thirst,
Or his hot brow to wet.