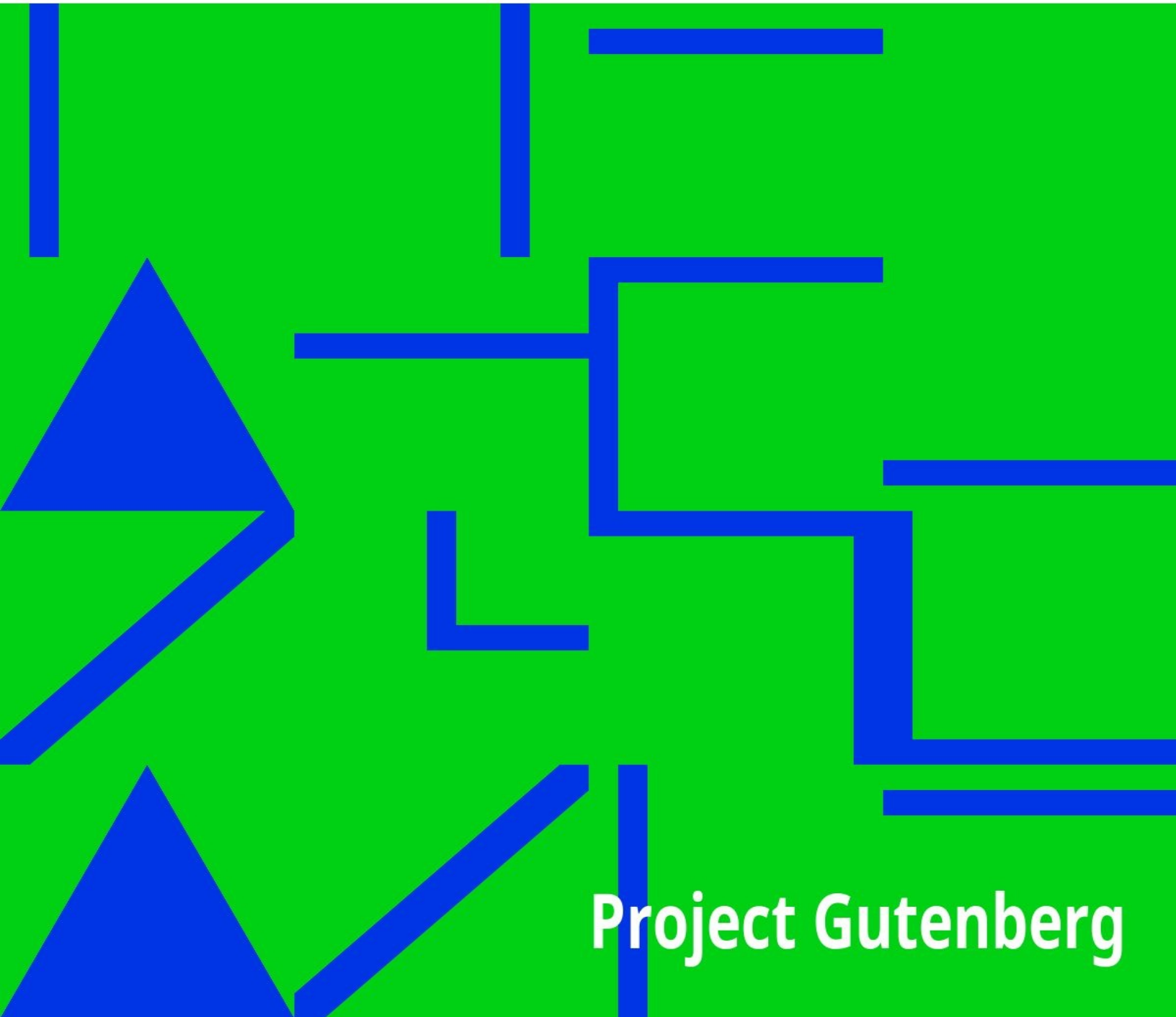


The Acorn-Planter

A California Forest Play (1916)

Jack London



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*** START OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE ACORN-PLANTER ***

Produced by David Widger

THE ACORN-PLANTER

**A California Forest Play
Planned To Be Sung By Efficient Singers
Accompanied By A Capable Orchestra**

By Jack London

1916



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ARGUMENT

In the morning of the world, while his tribe makes its camp for the night in a grove, Red Cloud, the first man of men, and the first man of the Nishinam, save in war, sings of the duty of life, which duty is to make life more abundant. The Shaman, or medicine man, sings of foreboding and prophecy. The War Chief, who commands in war, sings that war is the only way to life. This Red Cloud denies, affirming that the way of life is the way of the acorn-planter, and that whoso slays one man slays the planter of many acorns. Red Cloud wins the Shaman and the people to his contention.

After the passage of thousands of years, again in the grove appear the Nishinam. In Red Cloud, the War Chief, the Shaman, and the Dew-Woman are repeated the eternal figures of the philosopher, the soldier, the priest, and the woman—types ever realizing themselves afresh in the social adventures of man. Red Cloud recognizes the wrecked explorers as planters and life-makers, and is for treating them with kindness. But the War Chief and the idea of war are dominant. The Shaman joins with the war party, and is privy to the massacre of the explorers.

A hundred years pass, when, on their seasonal migration, the Nishinam camp for the night in the grove. They still live, and the war formula for life seems vindicated, despite the imminence of the superior life-makers, the whites, who are flooding into California from north, south, east, and west—the English, the Americans, the Spaniards, and the Russians. The massacre by the white men follows, and Red Cloud, dying, recognizes the white men as brother acorn-planters, the possessors of the superior life-formula of which he had always been a protagonist.

In the Epilogue, or Apotheosis, occur the celebration of the death of war and the triumph of the acorn-planters.

PROLOGUE

Time. *In the morning of the world.*

Scene. *A forest hillside where great trees stand with wide spaces between. A stream flows from a spring that bursts out of the hillside. It is a place of lush ferns and brakes, also, of thickets of such shrubs as inhabit a redwood forest floor. At the left, in the open level space at the foot of the hillside, extending out of sight among the trees, is visible a portion of a Nishinam Indian camp. It is a temporary camp for the night. Small cooking fires smoulder. Standing about are withe-woven baskets for the carrying of supplies and dunnage. Spears and bows and quivers of arrows lie about. Boys drag in dry branches for firewood. Young women fill gourds with water from the stream and proceed about their camp tasks. A number of older women are pounding acorns in stone mortars with stone pestles. An old man and a Shaman, or priest, look expectantly up the hillside. All wear moccasins and are skin-clad, primitive, in their garmenting. Neither iron nor woven cloth occurs in the weapons and gear.*

ACT I.

Shaman (*Looking up hillside.*) Red Cloud is late.

Old Man (*After inspection of hillside.*) He has chased
the deer far. He is patient.

In the chase he is patient like an old man.

Shaman His feet are as fleet as the deer's.

Old Man (*Nodding.*) And he is more patient than the
deer.

Shaman (*Assertively, as if inculcating a lesson.*) He
is a mighty chief.

Old Man (*Nodding.*) His father was a mighty chief. He
is like to
his father.

Shaman (*More assertively.*) He is his father. It is so
spoken. He is
his father's father. He is the first man, the
first Red Cloud, ever born, and born again, to
chiefship of his people.

Old Man It is so spoken.

Shaman His father was the Coyote. His mother was
the Moon. And he was the first man.

Old Man (*Repeating.*) His father was the Coyote. His
mother was
the Moon. And he was the first man.

Shaman He planted the first acorns, and he is very
wise.

Old Man (*Repeating.*) He planted the first acorns, and
he is very
wise.

(Cries from the women and a turning of faces. Red Cloud appears among his hunters descending the hillside. All carry spears, and bows and arrows. Some carry rabbits and other small game. Several carry deer)

PLAINT OF THE NISHINAM

Red Cloud, the meat-bringer!
Red Cloud, the acorn-planter!
Red Cloud, first man of the Nishinam!
Thy people hunger.
Far have they fared.
Hard has the way been.
Day long they sought,
High in the mountains,
Deep in the pools,
Wide 'mong the grasses,
In the bushes, and tree-tops,
Under the earth and flat stones.
Few are the acorns,
Past is the time for berries,
Fled are the fishes, the prawns and the grasshoppers,
Blown far are the grass-seeds,
Flown far are the young birds,
Old are the roots and withered.
Built are the fires for the meat.
Laid are the boughs for sleep,
Yet thy people cannot sleep.
Red Cloud, thy people hunger.

Red Cloud *(Still descending.)* Good hunting! Good hunting!

Hunters Good hunting! Good hunting!

(Completing the descent, Red Cloud motions to the meat-bearers. They throw down their burdens before the women, who greedily inspect the spoils.)

MEAT SONG OF THE NISHINAM

Meat that is good to eat,
Tender for old teeth,
Gristle for young teeth,
Big deer and fat deer,
Lean meat and fat meat,

Haunch-meat and knuckle-bone,
Liver and heart.
Food for the old men,
Life for all men,
For women and babes.
Easement of hunger-pangs,
Sorrow destroying,
Laughter provoking,
Joy invoking,
In the smell of its smoking
And its sweet in the mouth.

*(The younger women take charge of the meat,
and the older women resume their acorn-pounding.)
(Red Cloud approaches the acorn-pounders
and watches them with pleasure.
All group about him, the Shaman to the
fore, and hang upon his every action, his
every utterance.)*

Red Cloud The heart of the acorn is good?

First Old Woman *(Nodding.)* It is good food.

Red Cloud When you have pounded and winnowed and
washed away the bitter.

Second Old Woman As thou taught'st us, Red Cloud, when the
world was very young and thou wast the first man.

Red Cloud It is a fat food. It makes life, and life is
good.

Shaman It was thou, Red Cloud, gathering the acorns
and teaching the storing, who gavest life to the
Nishinam in the lean years aforetime, when the
tribes not of the Nishinam passed like the dew
of the morning.

(He nods a signal to the Old Man.)

Old Man In the famine in the old time,
When the old man was a young man,
When the heavens ceased from raining,
When the grasslands parched and withered,
When the fishes left the river,
And the wild meat died of sickness,
In the tribes that knew not acorns,
All their women went dry-breasted,

All their younglings chewed the deer-hides,
All their old men sighed and perished,
And the young men died beside them,
Till they died by tribe and totem,
And o'er all was death upon them.
Yet the Nishinam unvanquished,
Did not perish by the famine.
Oh, the acorns Red Cloud gave them!
Oh, the acorns Red Cloud taught them
How to store in willow baskets
'Gainst the time and need of famine!

Shaman *(Who, throughout the Old Man's recital, has
nodded approbation, turning to Red
Cloud.)*

Sing to thy people, Red Cloud, the song of
life which is the song of the acorn.

Red Cloud *(Making ready to begin)* And which is the
song of woman, O Shaman.

Shaman *(Hushing the people to listen, solemnly)* He
sings with his father's lips, and with the
lips of his father's fathers to the beginning of time
and men.
SONG OF THE FIRST MAN

Red Cloud I am Red Cloud,
The first man of the Nishinam.
My father was the Coyote.
My mother was the Moon.
The Coyote danced with the stars,
And wedded the Moon on a mid-summer night
The Coyote is very wise,
The Moon is very old,
Mine is his wisdom,
Mine is her age.
I am the first man.
I am the life-maker and the father of life.
I am the fire-bringer.
The Nishinam were the first men,
And they were without fire,
And knew the bite of the frost of bitter nights.
The panther stole the fire from the East,
The fox stole the fire from the panther,
The ground squirrel stole the fire from the fox,
And I, Red Cloud, stole the fire from the ground squirrel.

I, Red Cloud, stole the fire for the Nishinam,
And hid it in the heart of the wood.
To this day is the fire there in the heart of the wood.
I am the Acorn-Planter.
I brought down the acorns from heaven.
I planted the short acorns in the valley.
I planted the long acorns in the valley.
I planted the black-oak acorns that sprout, that sprout!
I planted the *sho-kum* and all the roots of the ground.
I planted the oat and the barley, the beaver-tail grass-nut,
The tar-weed and crow-foot, rock lettuce and ground lettuce,
And I taught the virtue of clover in the season of blossom,
The yellow-flowered clover, ball-rolled in its yellow dust.
I taught the cooking in baskets by hot stones from the fire,
Took the bite from the buckeye and soap-root
By ground-roasting and washing in the sweetness of water,
And of the manzanita the berry I made into flour,
Taught the way of its cooking with hot stones in sand pools,
And the way of its eating with the knobbed tail of the deer.
Taught I likewise the gathering and storing,
The parching and pounding
Of the seeds from the grasses and grass-roots;
And taught I the planting of seeds in the Nishinam home-camps,
In the Nishinam hills and their valleys,
In the due times and seasons,
To sprout in the spring rains and grow ripe in the sun.

Shaman Hail, Red Cloud, the first man!

The People Hail, Red Cloud, the first man!

Shaman Who showedst us the way of our feet in the world!

The People Who showedst us the way of our feet in the
world!

Shaman Who showedst us the way of our food in the world!

The People Who showedst us the way of our food in the
world!

Shaman Who showedst us the way of our hearts in the world!

The People Who showedst us the way of our hearts in the
world!

Shaman Who gavest us the law of family!

The People Who gavest us the law of family!

Shaman The law of tribe!

The People The law of tribe!

Shaman The law of totem!

The People The law of totem!

Shaman And madest us strong in the world among men!

The People And madest us strong in the world among men!

Red Cloud Life is good, O Shaman, and I have sung but half its song. Acorns are good. So is woman good. Strength is good. Beauty is good. So is kindness good. Yet are all these things without power except for woman. And by these things woman makes strong men, and strong men make for life, ever for more life.

War Chief *(With gesture of interruption that causes remonstrance from the Shaman but which Red Cloud acknowledges.)*

I care not for beauty. I desire strength in battle and wind in the chase that I may kill my enemy and run down my meat.

Red Cloud Well spoken, O War Chief. By voices in council we learn our minds, and that, too, is strength. Also, is it kindness. For kindness and strength and beauty are one. The eagle in the high blue of the sky is beautiful. The salmon leaping the white water in the sunlight is beautiful. The young man fastest of foot in the race is beautiful. And because they fly well, and leap well, and run well, are they beautiful. Beauty must beget beauty. The ring-tail cat begets the ring-tail cat, the dove the dove. Never does the dove beget the ring-tail cat. Hearts must be kind. The little turtle is not kind. That is why it is the little turtle. It lays its eggs in the sun-warm sand and forgets its young forever. And the little turtle is forever the little turtle. But we are not little turtles,

because we are kind. We do not leave our young
to the sun in the sand. Our women keep our
young warm under their hearts, and, after, they
keep them warm with deer-skin and campfire.
Because we are kind we are men and not little
turtles, and that is why we eat the little turtle
that is not strong because it is not kind.

War Chief *(Gesturing to be heard.)* The Modoc come
against us in their strength.

Often the Modoc come against us. We cannot
be kind to the Modoc.

Red Cloud That will come after. Kindness grows. First
must we be kind to our own. After, long after,
all men will be kind to all men, and all men will
be very strong. The strength of the Nishinam
is not the strength of its strongest fighter. It is
the strength of all the Nishinam added together
that makes the Nishinam strong. We talk, you
and I, War Chief and First Man, because we are
kind one to the other, and thus we add together
our wisdom, and all the Nishinam are stronger
because we have talked.

*(A voice is heard singing. Red Cloud
holds up his hand for silence.)*

MATING SONG

Dew-Woman In the morning by the river,
 In the evening at the fire,
In the night when all lay sleeping,
 Torn was I with life's desire.
There were stirrings 'neath my heart-beats
 Of the dreams that came to me;
In my ears were whispers, voices,
 Of the children yet to be.

Red Cloud *(As Red Cloud sings, Dew-Woman
steals from behind a tree and approaches
him.)*

In the morning by the river
 Saw I first my maid of dew,
Daughter of the dew and dawnlight,
 Of the dawn and honey-dew.
She was laughter, she was sunlight,
 Woman, maid, and mate, and wife;

She was sparkle, she was gladness,
She was all the song of life.

Dew-Woman In the night I built my fire,
Fire that maidens foster when
In the ripe of mating season
Each builds for her man of men.

Red Cloud In the night I sought her, proved her,
Found her ease, content, and rest,
After day of toil and struggle
Man's reward on woman's breast.

Dew-Woman Came to me my mate and lover;
Kind the hands he laid on me;
Wooed me gently as a man may,
Father of the race to be.

Red Cloud Soft her arms about me bound me,
First man of the Nishinam,
Arms as soft as dew and dawnlight,
Daughter of the Nishinam.

Red Cloud She was life and she was woman!

Dew-Woman He was life and he was man!

Red Cloud and Dew-Woman

(*Arms about each other.*) In the dusk-time of our love-
night,
There beside the marriage fire,
Proved we all the sweets of living,
In the arms of our desire.

War Chief (*Angrily.*) The councils of men are not the
place for
women.

Red Cloud (*Gently.*) As men grow kind and wise there
will be
women in the councils of men. As men grow
their women must grow with them if they would
continue to be the mothers of men.

War Chief It is told of old time that there are women in
the councils of the Sim. And is it not told that

the Sun Man will destroy us?

Red Cloud Then is the Sun Man the stronger; it may be
because of his kindness and wiseness, and because
of his women.

Young Brave Is it told that the women of the Sun are good
to the eye, soft to the arm, and a fire in the heart
of man?

Shaman (*Holding up hand solemnly.*) It were well, lest
the young do not forget, to
repeat the old word again.

War Chief (*Nodding confirmation.*) Here, where the tale
is told.

 (*Pointing to the spring.*) Here, where the water burst from
under the heel
of the Sun Man mounting into the sky.

*(War Chief leads the way up the hillside
to the spring, and signals to the Old Man
to begin)*

Old Man When the world was in the making,
Here within the mighty forest,
Came the Sun Man every morning.
White and shining was the Sun Man,
Blue his eyes were as the sky-blue,
Bright his hair was as dry grass is,
Warm his eyes were as the sun is,
Fruit and flower were in his glances;
All he looked on grew and sprouted,
As these trees we see about us,
Mightiest trees in all the forest,
For the Sun Man looked upon them.

Where his glance fell grasses seeded,
Where his feet fell sprang upstarting—
Buckeye woods and hazel thickets,
Berry bushes, manzanita,
Till his pathway was a garden,
Flowing after like a river,
Laughing into bud and blossom.
There was never frost nor famine
And the Nishinam were happy,
Singing, dancing through the seasons,

Never cold and never hungered,
When the Sun Man lived among us.

But the foxes mean and cunning,
Hating Nishinam and all men,
Laid their snares within this forest,
Caught the Sun Man in the morning,
With their ropes of sinew caught him,
Bound him down to steal his wisdom
And become themselves bright Sun Men,
Warm of glance and fruitful-footed,
Masters of the frost and famine.

Swiftly the Coyote running
Came to aid the fallen Sun Man,
Swiftly killed the cunning foxes,
Swiftly cut the ropes of sinew,
Swiftly the Coyote freed him.

But the Sun Man in his anger,
Lightning flashing, thunder-throwing,
Loosed the frost and fanged the famine,
Thorned the bushes, pinched the berries,
Put the bitter in the buckeye,
Rocked the mountains to their summits,
Flung the hills into the valleys,
Sank the lakes and shoaled the rivers,
Poured the fresh sea in the salt sea,
Stamped his foot here in the forest,
Where the water burst from under
Heel that raised him into heaven—
Angry with the world forever
Rose the Sun Man into heaven.

Shaman *(Solemnly.)* I am the Shaman. I know what has
gone before and what will come after. I have passed
down through the gateway of death and talked
with the dead. My eyes have looked upon the
unseen things. My ears have heard the
unspoken words. And now I shall tell you of
the Sun Man in the days to come.

*(Shaman stiffens suddenly with hideous
facial distortions, with inturned eye-balls
and loosened jaw. He waves his arms
about, writhes and twists in torment, as*

if in epilepsy.)

(The Women break into a wailing, inarticulate chant, swaying their bodies to the accent. The men join them somewhat reluctantly, all save Red Cloud, who betrays vexation, and War Chief, who betrays truculence.)

(Shaman, leading the rising frenzy, with convulsive shiverings and tremblings tears of his skin garments so that he is quite naked save for a girdle of eagle-claws about his thighs. His long black hair flies about his face. With an abruptness that is startling, he ceases all movement and stands erect, rigid. This is greeted with a low moaning that slowly dies away.)

CHANT OF PROPHECY

Shaman The Sun never grows cold.
The Sun Man is like the Sun.
His anger never grows cold.
The Sun Man will return.
The Sun Man will come back from the Sun.

People The Sun Man will return.
The Sun Man will come back from the Sun.

Shaman There is a sign.
As the water burst forth when he rose into the sky,
So will the water cease to flow when he returns from the sky.
The Sun Man is mighty.
In his eyes is blue fire.
In his hands he bears the thunder.
The lightnings are in his hair.

People In his hands he bears the thunder.
The lightnings are in his hair.

Shaman There is a sign.
The Sun Man is white.
His skin is white like the sun.
His hair is bright like the sunlight.'
His eyes are blue like the sky.

People There is a sign.
The Sun Man is white.

Shaman The Sun Man is mighty.
He is the enemy of the Nishinam.
He will destroy the Nishinam.

People He is the enemy of the Nishinam.
He will destroy the Nishinam.

Shaman There is a sign.
The Sun Man will bear the thunder in his hand.

People There is a sign.
The Sun Man will bear the thunder in his hand.

Shaman In the day the Sun Man comes
The water from the spring will no longer flow.
And in that day he will destroy the Nishinam.
With the thunder will he destroy the Nishinam.
The Nishinam will be like last year's grasses.
The Nishinam will be like the smoke of last year's campfires.
The Nishinam will be less than the dreams that trouble the
sleeper.
The Nishinam will be like the days no man remembers.
I am the Shaman.
I have spoken.

(The People set up a sad wailing.)
War Chief *(Striking his chest with his fist.)* Hoh!
Hoh! Hoh!

*(The People cease from their wailing and
look to the War Chief with hopeful
expectancy.)*

War Chief I am the War Chief. In war I command.
Nor the Shaman nor Red Cloud may say me nay
when in war I command. Let the Sun Man
come back. I am not afraid. If the foxes snared
him with ropes, then can I slay him with spear-
thrust and war-club. I am the War Chief. In
war I command.

*(The People greet War Chief's pronouncement
with warlike cries of approval.)*

Red Cloud The foxes are cunning. If they snared the Sun
Man
With ropes of sinew, then let us be cunning
And snare him with ropes of kindness.

In kindness, O War Chief, is strength, much strength.

Shaman Red Cloud speaks true. In kindness is strength.

War Chief I am the War Chief.

Shaman You cannot slay the Sun Man.

War Chief I am the War Chief.

Shaman The Sun Man fights with the thunder in his hand.

War Chief I am the War Chief.

Red Cloud *(As he speaks the People are visibly won by his argument.)*

You speak true, O War Chief. In war you command. You are strong, most strong. You have slain the Modoc. You have slain the Napa. You have slain the Clam-Eaters of the big water till the last one is not. Yet you have not slain all the foxes. The foxes cannot fight, yet are they stronger than you because you cannot slay them. The foxes are foxes, but we are men. When the Sun Man comes we will not be cunning like the foxes. We will be kind. Kindness and love will we give to the Sun Man, so that he will be our friend. Then will he melt the frost, pull the teeth of famine, give us back our rivers of deep water, our lakes of sweet water, take the bitter from the buckeye, and in all ways make the world the good world it was before he left us.

People Hail, Red Cloud, the first man!
Hail, Red Cloud, the Acorn-Planter!
Who showed us the way of our feet in the world!
Who showed us the way of our food in the world!
Who showed us the way of our hearts in the world!
Who gave us the law of family,
The law of tribe,
The law of totem,
And made us strong in the world among men!

(While the People sing the hillside slowly grows dark.)

ACT I

(Ten thousand years have passed, and it is the time of the early voyaging from Europe to the waters of the Pacific, when the deserted hillside is again revealed as the moon rises. The stream no longer flows from the spring. Since the grove is used only as a camp for the night when the Nishinam are on their seasonal migration there are no signs of previous camps.)

(Enter from right, at end of day's march, women, old men, and Shaman, the women bending under their burdens of camp gear and dunnage)

(Enter from left youths carrying fish-spears and large fish)

(Appear, coming down the hillside, Red Cloud and the hunters, many carrying meat.)

(The various repeated characters, despite differences of skin garmenting and decoration, resemble their prototypes of the prologue.)

Red Cloud Good hunting! Good hunting!

Hunters Good hunting! Good hunting!

Youths Good fishing! Good fishing!

Women Good berries! Good acorns!

(The women and youths and hunters, as they reach the campsite, begin throwing down their burdens)

Dew-Woman *(Discovering the dry spring.)* The water no longer flows!

Shaman *(Stilling the excitement that is immediate on the discovery.)* The word of old time that has come down to us from all the Shamans who have gone before! The Sun Man has come back from the Sun.

Dew-Woman *(Looking to Red Cloud.)* Let Red Cloud speak. Since the morning of the world has Red Cloud ever been reborn with the ancient wisdom to guide us.

War Chief Save in war. In war I command.

(He picks out hunters by name.) Deer Foot... Elk Man...
Antelope. Run
through the forest, climb the hill-tops, seek down
the valleys, for aught you may find of this Sun Man.

*(At a wave of the War Chief's hand the
three hunters depart in different directions.)*
Dew-Woman Let Red Cloud speak his mind.

Red Cloud *(Quietly)* Last night the earth shook and
there was a
roaring in the air. Often have I seen, when the
earth shakes and there is a roaring, that springs
in some places dry up, and that in other places
where were no springs, springs burst forth.

Shaman There is a sign.
The Shamans told it of old.
The Sun Man will bear the thunder in his hand.

People There is a sign.
The Sun Man will bear the thunder in his hand.

Shaman The roaring in the air was the thunder of the
Sun Man's return. Now will he destroy the
Nishinam. Such is the word.

War Chief Hoh! Hoh!

(From right Deer Foot runs in.)

Deer Foot *(Breathless.)* They come! He comes!

War Chief Who comes?

Deer Foot The Sun Men. The Sun Man. He is their
chief. He marches before them. And he is
white.

People There is a sign.
The Sun Man is white.

Red Cloud Carries he the thunder in his hand?

Deer Foot *(Puzzled)* He looks hungry.

War Chief Hoh! Hoh! The Sun Man is hungry. It

will be easy to kill a hungry Sun Man.

Red Cloud It would be easy to be kind to a hungry Sun Man and give him food. We have much. The hunting has been good.

War Chief Better to kill the Sun Man.

(He turns upon People, indicating most commands in gestures as he prepares the ambush, making women and boys conceal all the camp outfit and game, and disposing the armed hunters among the ferns and behind trees till all are hidden.)

Elk Man and Antelope *(Running down hillside)* The Sun Man comes.

(War Chief sends them to hiding places)

War Chief *(Preparing himself to hide)* You have not hidden, O Red Cloud.

Red Cloud *(Stepping into shadow of big tree where he remains inconspicuous though dimly visible)* I would see this Sun Man and talk with him.

(The sound of singing is heard, and War Chief conceals himself)
(Sun Man, with handful of followers, singing to ease the tedium of the march, enter from right. They are patently survivors of a wrecked exploring skip, making their way inland)

Sun Men We sailed three hundred strong
For the far Barbaree;
Our voyage has been most long
For the far Barbaree;
So—it's a long pull,
Give a strong pull,
For the far Barbaree.

We sailed the oceans wide
For the coast of Barbaree;
And left our ship a sinking
On the coast of Barbaree;
So—it's a long pull,
Give a strong pull,
For the far Barbaree.

Our ship went fast a-lee
On the rocks of Barbaree;
That's why we quit the sea
On the rocks of Barbaree.
So—it's a long pull,
Give a strong pull,
For the far Barbaree.

We quit the bitter seas
On the coast of Barbaree;
To seek the savag-ees
Of the far Barbaree.
So—it's a long pull,
Give a strong pull,
For the far Barbaree.

Our feet are lame and sore
In the far Barbaree;
From treading of the shore
Of the far Barbaree.
So—it's a long pull,
Give a strong pull,
For the far Barbaree.

A weary brood are we
In the far Barbaree;
Sea cunies of the sea
In the far Barbaree.
So—it's a long pull,
Give a strong pull,
For the far Barbaree.

Sun Man (*who alone carries a musket, and who is*
 evidently captain of the wrecked company) No farther can
we go this night. Mayhap
to-morrow we may find the savages and food.

 (*He glances about.*) This far world grows noble trees. We
shall sleep
as in a temple.

First Sea Cuny (*Espying Red Cloud, and pointing.*)
Look, Captain!

Sun Man (*Making the universal peace-sign, arm*
 raised and out, palm-outward.) Who are you? Speak. We come

in peace.

We kindness seek.

Red Cloud *(Advancing out of the shadow.)* Whence do you come?

Sun Man From the great sea.

Red Cloud I do not understand. No one journeys on the great sea.

Sun Man We have journeyed many moons.

Red Cloud Have you come from the sun?

Sun Man God wot! We have journeyed across the sun, high and low in the sky, and over the sun and under the sun the round world 'round.

Red Cloud *(With conviction.)* You come from the Sun.
Your hair is like
the summer sunburnt grasses. Your eyes are
blue. Your skin is white.

(With absolute conviction.) You are the Sun Man.

Sun Man *(With a shrug of shoulders.)* Have it so. I come from the Sun. I am the Sun Man.

Red Cloud Do you carry the thunder in your hand?

Sun Man *(Nonplussed for the moment, glances at his musket, then smiles.)* Yes, I carry the thunder in my hand.

(War Chief and the Hunters leap suddenly from ambush. Sun Man warns Sea Cunes not to resist. War Chief captures and holds Sun Man, and Sea Cunes are similarly captured and held. Women and boys appear, and examine prisoners curiously.)

War Chief Hoh! Hoh! Hoh! I have captured the Sun Man! Like the foxes, I have captured the Sun Man!—Deer Foot! Elk Man! The foxes held the Sun Man. I now hold the Sun

Man. Then can you hold the Sun Man.

(Deer Foot and Elk Man seize the Sun Man.)

Red Cloud *(To Shaman.)* He said he came in kindness.

War Chief *(Sneering.)* In kindness, with the thunder in his hand.

Shaman *(Deflected to partisanship of War Chief by War Chief's success.)* By his own lips has he said it, with the thunder in his hand.

War Chief You are the Sun Man.

Sun Man *(Shrugging shoulders.)* My names are many as the stars. Call me White Man.

Red Cloud I am Red Cloud, the first man.

Sun Man Then am I Adam, the first man and your brother.

(Glancing about.) And this is Eden, to look upon it.

Red Cloud My father was the Coyote.

Sun Man My father was Jehovah.

Red Cloud I am the Fire-Bringer. I stole the fire from the ground squirrel and hid it in the heart of the wood.

Sun Man Then am I Prometheus, your brother. I stole the fire from heaven and hid it in the heart of the wood.

Red Cloud I am the Acorn-Planter. I am the Food-Bringer, the Life-Maker. I make food for more life, ever more life.

Sun Man Then am I truly your brother. Life-Maker am I, tilling the soil in the sweat of my brow from the beginning of time, planting all manner of good seeds for the harvest.

(Looking sharply at Red Cloud's skin garments.) Also am I the Weaver and Cloth-Maker.

(Holding out arm so that Red Cloud may examine the cloth of the coat) From the hair of the goat and the wool of the sheep, and from beaten and spun grasses, do I make the cloth to keep man warm.

Shaman *(Breaking in boastfully.)* I am the Shaman. I know all secret things.

Sun Man I know my pathway under the sun over all the seas, and I know the secrets of the stars that show me my path where no path is. I know when the Wolf of Darkness shall eat the moon.

(Pointing toward moon.) On this night shall the Wolf of Darkness eat the moon.

(He turns suddenly to Red Cloud, drawing sheath-knife and passing it to him.)

More, O First Man and Acorn-Planter. I am the Iron-Maker. Behold!

(Red Cloud examines knife, understands immediately its virtue, cuts easily a strip of skin from his skin garment, and is overcome with the wonder of the knife.)

War Chief *(Exhibiting a long bow.)* I am the War Chief. No man, save me, has strength to bend this bow. I can slay farther than any man.

(A huge bear has come out among the bushes far up the hillside)

Sun Man I, too, am War Chief over men, and I can slay farther than you.

War Chief Hoh! Hoh!

Sun Man *(Pointing to bear)* Can you slay that with your strong bow?

War Chief *(Dubiously)* It is a far shot. Too far. No
man can slay
a great bear so far.

*(Sun Man, shaking off from his arms the
hands of Deer Foot and Elk Man,
aims musket and fires. The bear falls,
and the Nishinam betray astonishment
and awe)*

*(At a quick signal from War Chief,
Sun Man is again seized. War Chief
takes away musket and examines it.)*

Shaman There is a sign.

People There is a sign.
He carries the thunder in his hand.
He slays with the thunder in his hand.
He is the enemy of the Nishinam.
He will destroy the Nishinam.

Shaman There is a sign.

People There is a sign.
In the day the Sun Man comes,
The waters from the spring will no longer flow,
And in that day will he destroy the Nishinam.

War Chief *(Exhibiting musket.)* Hoh! Hoh! I have taken
the Sun Man's
thunder.

Shaman Now shall the Sun Man die that the Nishinam
may live.

Red Cloud He is our brother. He, too, is an acorn-
planter. He has spoken.

Shaman He is the Sun Man, and he is our eternal
enemy. He shall die.

War Chief In war I command.

(To Hunters.) Tie their feet with stout thongs that they
may not run. And then make ready with bow
and arrow to do the deed.

(Hunters obey, urging and thrusting the Sea Cunes into a compact group behind the Sun Man.)

Red Cloud Shaman I am not.
I know not the secret things.
I say the things I know.
When you plant kindness you harvest kindness.
When you plant blood you harvest blood.
He who plants one acorn makes way for life.
He who slays one man slays the planter of a
thousand acorns.

Shaman Shaman I am.
I see the dark future.
I see the Sun Man's death,
The journey he must take
Through thick and endless forest
Where lost souls wander howling
A thousand moons of moons.

People Through thick and endless forest
Where lost souls wander howling
A thousand moons of moons.

(War Chief arranges Hunters with their bows and arrows for the killing.)

Sun Man *(To Red Cloud.)* You will slay us?

Red Cloud *(Indicating War Chief.)* In war he commands.

Sun Man *(Addressing the Nishinam)* Nor am I a Shaman.
But I will tell you true
things to be. Our brothers are acorn-planters,
cloth-weavers, iron-workers. Our brothers are
life-makers and masters of life. Many are our
brothers and strong. They will come after us.
Your First Man has spoken true words. When
you plant blood you harvest blood. Our brothers
will come to the harvest with the thunder
in their hands. There is a sign. This night,
and soon, will the Wolf of Darkness eat the
moon. And by that sign will our brothers come
on the trail we have broken.

(As final preparation for the killing is completed, and as Hunters are arranged with their bows and arrows,

Sun Man sings.)

Sun Man Our brothers will come after,
On our trail to farthest lands;
Our brothers will come after
With the thunder in their hands.

Sun Men Loud will be the weeping,
Red will be the reaping,
High will be the heaping
Of the slain their law commands.

Sun Man Givers of law, our brothers,
This is the law they say:
Who takes the life of a brother
Ten of the slayers shall pay.

Sun Men Our brothers will come after,
On our trail to farthest lands;
Our brothers will come after
With the thunder in their hands.
Loud will be the weeping,
Red will be the reaping,
High will be the heaping
Of the slain their law commands.

Sun Man Our brothers will come after
By the courses that we lay;
Many and strong our brothers,
Masters of life are they.

Sun Men Our brothers will come after
On our trail to farthest lands;
Our brothers will come after
With the thunder in their hands.
Loud will be the weeping,
Red will be the reaping,
High will be the heaping
Of the slain their law commands.

Sun Man Plowers of land, our brothers,
Of the hills and pleasant leas;
Under the sun our brothers
With their keels will plow the seas.

Sun Men Our brothers will come after,
On our trail to farthest lands;
Our brothers will come after

With the thunder in their hands.
Loud will be the weeping,
Red will be the reaping,
High will be the heaping
Of the slain their law commands.

Sun Man Mighty men are our brothers,
Quick to forgive and to wrath,
Sailing the seas, our brothers
Will follow us on our path.

Sun Men Our brothers will come after,
On our trail to farthest lands;
Our brothers will come after
With the thunder in their hands.
Loud will be the weeping,
Red will be the reaping,
High will be the heaping
Of the slain their law commands.

*(At signal from War Chief the arrows
are discharged, and repeatedly
discharged. The Sun Men fall. The War
Chief himself kills the Sun Man.)
(In what follows, Red Cloud and Dew-
Woman stand aside, taking no part.
Red Cloud is depressed, and at the
same time is overcome with the wonder
of the knife which he still holds.)*

War Chief *(Brandishing musket and drifting stiff-
legged, as he sings, into the beginning
of a war dance of victory.)* Hoh! Hoh! Hoh!
I have slain the Sun Man!
Hoh! Hoh! Hoh!
I hold his thunder in my hand!
Hoh! Hoh! Hoh!
Greatest of War Chiefs am I!
Hoh! Hoh! Hoh!
I have slain the Sun Man!

*(The dance grows wilder.)
(After a time the hillside begins to darken)*

Dew-Woman *(Pointing to the moon entering eclipse)* Lo!
The Wolf of Darkness eats the Moon!

*(In consternation the dance is broken off
for the moment)*

Shaman *(Reassuringly)* It is a sign.
The Sun Man is dead.

War Chief *(Recovering courage and resuming dance.)*
Hoh! Hoh! Hoh!
The Sun Man is dead!

People *(Resuming dance.)* Hoh! Hoh! Hoh!
The Sun Man is dead!

*(As darkness increases the dance grows
into a saturnalia, until complete darkness
settles down and hides the hillside.)*

ACT II

(A hundred years have passed, when the hillside and the Nishinam in their temporary camp are revealed. The spring is flowing, and Women are filling gourds with water. Red Cloud and Dew-Woman stand apart from their people.)

Shaman *(Pointing.)* There is a sign.
The spring lives.
The water flows from the spring
And all is well with the Nishinam.

People There is a sign.
The spring lives.
The water flows from the spring.

War Chief *(Boastingly.)* Hoh! Hoh! Hoh!
All is well with the Nishinam.
Hoh! Hoh! Hoh!
It is I who have made all well with the Nishinam.
Hoh! Hoh! Hoh!

I led our young men against the Napa.
Hoh! Hoh! Hoh!
We left no man living of the camp.
Hoh! Hoh! Hoh!

Shaman Great is our War Chief!
Good is war!
No more will the Napa hunt our meat.
No more will the Napa pick our berries.
No more will the Napa catch our fish.

People No more will the Napa hunt our meat.
No more will the Napa pick our berries.
No more will the Napa catch our fish.

War Chief Hoh! Hoh! Hoh!
The War Chiefs before me made all well with
the Nishinam.
Hoh! Hoh! Hoh!

The War Chief of long ago slew the Sun Man.
Hoh! Hoh! Hoh!
The Sun Man said his brothers would come after.
Hoh! Hoh! Hoh!
The Sun Man lied.

People Hoh! Hoh! Hoh!
The Sun Man lied.
Hoh! Hoh! Hoh!
The Sun Man lied.

Shaman (*Derisively.*) Red Cloud is sick. He lives in
dreams. Ever
he dreams of the wonders of the Sun Man.

Red Cloud The Sun Man was strong. The Sun Man was
a life-maker. The Sun Man planted acorns,
and cut quickly with a knife not of bone nor
stone, and of grasses and hides made cunning
cloth that is better than all grasses and hides.
—Old Man, where is the cunning cloth that is
better than all grasses and hides?

Old Man (*Fumbling in his skin pouch for the doth.*) In
the many moons aforetime,
Hundred moons and many hundred,
When the old man was the young man,
When the young man was the youngling,
Dragging branches for the campfire,
Stealing suet from the bear-meat,
Cause of trouble to his mother,
Came the Sun Man in the night-time.
I alone of all the Nishinam
Live to-day to tell the story;
I alone of all the Nishinam
Saw the Sun Man come among us,
Heard the Sun Man and his Sun Men
Sing their death-song here among us
Ere they died beneath our arrows,
War Chief's arrows sharp and feathered—

War Chief (*Interrupting braggartly.*) Hoh! Hoh! Hoh!

Old Man (*Producing cloth.*) And the Sun Man and his Sun
Men
Wore nor hair nor hide nor birdskin.
Cloth they wore from beaten grasses

Woven like our willow baskets,
Willow-woven acorn baskets
Women make in acorn season.

(Old Man hands piece of cloth to Red Cloud.)

Red Cloud *(Admiring cloth.)* The Sun Man was an acorn-planter, and we
killed the Sun Man. We were not kind. We
made a blood-debt. Blood-debts are not good.

Shaman The Sun Man lied. His brothers did not come
after. There is no blood-debt when there is no
one to make us pay.

Red Cloud He who plants acorns reaps food, and food is
life. He who sows war reaps war, and war is death.

People *(Encouraged by Shaman and War Chief
to drown out Red Cloud's voice.)* Hoh! Hoh! Hoh!
The Sun Man is dead!
Hoh! Hoh! Hoh!
The Sun Man and his Sun Men are dead!

Red Cloud *(Shaking his head.)* His brothers of the Sun
are coming after.
I have reports.

*(Red Cloud beckons one after another of
the young hunters to speak)*

First Hunter To the south, not far, I wandered and lived
with the Petaluma. With my eyes I did not
see, but it was told me by those whose eyes had
seen, that still to the south, not far, were many
Sun Men—war chiefs who carry the thunder in
their hands; cloth-makers and weavers of cloth
like to that in Red Cloud's hand; acorn-planters
who plant all manner of strange seeds that ripen
to rich harvests of food that is good. And there
had been trouble. The Petaluma had killed
Sun Men, and many Petaluma had the Sun Men
killed.

Second Hunter To the east, not far, I wandered and lived
with
the Solano. With my own eyes I did not see,
but it was told me by those whose eyes had seen,

that still to the east, not far, and just beyond the lands of the Tule tribes, were many Sun Men—war chiefs and cloth-makers and acorn-planters. And there had been trouble. The Solano had killed Sun Men, and many Solano had the Sun Men killed.

Third Hunter To the north, and far, I wandered and lived with the Klamath. With my own eyes I did not see, but it was told me by those whose eyes had seen, that still to the north, and far, were many Sun Men—war chiefs and cloth-makers and acorn-planters. And there had been trouble. The Klamath had killed Sun Men, and many Klamath had the Sun Men killed.

Fourth Hunter To the west, not far, three days gone I wandered, where, from the mountain, I looked down upon the great sea. With my own eyes I saw. It was like a great bird that swam upon the water. It had great wings like to our great trees here. And on its back I saw men, many men, and they were Sun Men. With my own eyes I saw.

Red Cloud We shall be kind to the Sun Men when they come among us.

War Chief (*Dancing stiff-legged.*) Hoh! Hoh! Hoh!
Let the Sun Men come!
Hoh! Hoh! Hoh!
We will kill the Sun Men when they come!

People (*As they join in the war dance.*) Hoh! Hoh! Hoh!
Let the Sun Men come!
Hoh! Hoh! Hoh!
We will kill the Sun Men when they come.

(*The dance grows wilder, the Shaman and War Chief encouraging it, while Red Cloud and Dew-Woman stand sadly at a distance.*)
(*Rifle shots ring out from every side. Up the hillside appear Sun Men firing rifles. The Nishinam reel to death from their dancing.*)
(*Red Cloud shields Dew-Woman with one arm about her, and with the other arm*

makes the peace-sign)

*(The massacre is complete, Dew-Woman
and Red Cloud being the last to fall.
Red Cloud, wounded, the sole survivor,
rests on his elbow and watches the Sun
Men assemble about their leader)*

*(The Sun Men are the type of pioneer
Americans who, even before the discovery
of gold, were already drifting across the
Sierras and down into Oregon and
California with their oxen and great wagons.
With here and there a Rocky Mountain
trapper or a buckskin-clad scout of the
Kit Carson type, in the main they are
backwoods farmers. All carry the long
rifle of the period.)*

*(The Sun Man is buckskin-clad, with long
blond hair sweeping his shoulders.)*

Sun Men *(Led by Sun Man.)* We crossed the Western Ocean

Three hundred years ago,
We cleared New England's forests
Three hundred years ago.
Blow high, blow low,
Heigh hi, heigh ho,
We cleared New England's forests
Three hundred years ago.

We climbed the Alleghanies
Two hundred years ago,
We reached the Susquehanna
Two hundred years ago.
Blow high, blow low,
Heigh hi, heigh ho,
We reached the Susquehanna
Two hundred years ago.

We crossed the Mississippi
One hundred years ago,
And glimpsed the Rocky Mountains
One hundred years ago.
Blow high, blow low,
Heigh hi, heigh ho,
And glimpsed the Rocky Mountains
One hundred years ago.

We passed the Rocky Mountains
A year or so ago,

And crossed the salty deserts
A year or so ago.
Blow high, blow low,
Heigh hi, heigh ho,
And crossed the salty deserts
A year or so ago.

We topped the high Sierras
But a few days ago,
And saw great California
But a few days ago.
Blow high, blow low,
Heigh hi, heigh ho,
And saw great California
But a few days ago.

We crossed Sonoma's mountains
An hour or so ago,
And found this mighty forest
An hour or so ago.
Blow high, blow low,
Heigh hi, heigh ho,
And found this mighty forest
An hour or so ago.

Sun Man (*Glancing about at the slain and at the giant forest.*) Good the day, good the deed, and good this California land.

Red Cloud Not with these eyes, but with other eyes in my lives before, have I beheld you. You are the Sun Man.

(The attention of all is drawn to Red Cloud, and they group about him and the Sun Man.)

Sun Man Call me White Man. Though in truth we follow the sun. All our lives have we followed the sunset sun, as our fathers followed it before us.

Red Cloud And you slay us with the thunder in your hand. You slay us because we slew your brothers.

Sun Man (*Nodding to Red Cloud and addressing his own followers*) You see, it was no mistake. He confesses it.

Other white men have they slain.

Red Cloud There will come a day when men will not slay men and when all men will be brothers. And in that day all men will plant acorns.

Sun Man You speak well, brother.

Red Cloud Ever was I for peace, but in war I did not command.

Ever I sought the secrets of the growing things, the times and seasons for planting. Ever I planted acorns, making two black oak trees grow where one grew before. And now all is ended. Oh my black oak acorns! My black oak acorns! Who will plant them now?

Sun Man Be of good cheer. We, too, are planters. Rich is your land here. Not from poor soil can such trees sprout heavenward. We will plant many seeds and grow mighty harvests.

Red Cloud I planted the short acorns in the valley. I planted the long acorns in the valley. I made food for life.

Sun Man You planted well, brother, but not well enough. It is for that reason that you pass. Your fat valley grows food but for a handful of men. We shall plant your fat valley and grow food for ten thousand men.

Red Cloud Ever I counseled peace and planting.

Sun Man Some day all men will counsel peace. No man will slay his fellow. All men will plant.

Red Cloud But before that day you will slay, as you have this day slain us?

Sun Man You killed our brothers first. Blood-debts must be paid. It is man's way upon the earth. But more, O brother! We follow the sunset sun, and the way before us is red with war. The way behind us is white with peace. Ever, before us, we make room for life. Ever we slay the squalling crawling things of the wild. Ever we

clear the land and destroy the weeds that block
the way of life for the seeds we plant. We are
many, and many are our brothers that come after
along the way of peace we blaze. Where you
make two black oaks grow in the place of one,
we make an hundred. And where we make one
grow, our brothers who come after make an
hundred hundred.

Red Cloud Truly are you the Sun Man. We knew about
you of old time. Our old men knew and sang of
you:

White and shining was the Sun Man,
Blue his eyes were as the sky-blue,
Bright his hair was as dry grass is,
Warm his eyes were as the sun is,
Fruit and flower were in his glances,
All he looked on grew and sprouted,
Where his glance fell grasses seeded,
Where his feet fell sprang upstarting
Buckeye woods and hazel thickets,
Berry bushes, manzanita,
Till his pathway was a garden,
Flowing after like a river
Laughing into bud and blossom.
SONG OF THE PIONEERS

Sun Men Our brothers follow on the trail we blaze.
Where howled the wolf and ached the naked plain
Spring bounteous harvests at our brothers' hands;
In place of war's alarms, peaceful days;
Above the warrior's grave the golden grain
Turns deserts grim and stark to laughing lands.

Sun Man We cleared New England's flinty slopes and plowed
Her rocky fields to fairness in the sun,
But fared we westward always for we sought
A land of golden richness and we knew
The land was waiting on the sunset trail.
Where we found forest we left fertile fields,
We bridled rivers wild to grind our corn,
The deer-paths turned to roadways at our heels,
Our axes felled the trees that bridged the streams,
And fenced the meadow pastures for our kine.

Sun Men Our brothers follow on the trail we blaze;

Where howled the wolf and ached the naked plain
Spring bounteous harvests at our brothers' hands;
In place of war's alarums, peaceful days;
Above the warrior's grave the golden grain
Turns deserts grim and stark to laughing lands.

Sun Man Beyond the Mississippi still we fared,
And rested weary by the River Platte
Until the young grass velveted the Plains,
Then yoked again our oxen to the trail
That ever led us west to farthest west.
Our women toiled beside us, and our young,
And helped to break the soil and plant the corn,
And fought beside us in the battle front
To fight of arrow, whine of bullet, when
We chained our circled wagons wheel to wheel.

Sun Men Our brothers follow on the trail we blaze;
Where howled the wolf and ached the naked plain
Spring bounteous harvests at our brothers hands;
In place of war's alarums, peaceful days;
Above the warrior's grave the golden grain
Turns deserts grim and stark to laughing lands.

Sun Man The rivers sank beneath the desert sand,
The tall pines dwarfed to sage-brush, and the grass
Grew sparse and bitter in the alkali,
But fared we always toward the setting sun.
Our oxen famished till the last one died
And our great wagons rested in the snow.
We climbed the high Sierras and looked down
From winter bleak upon the land we sought,
A sunny land, a rich and fruitful land,
The warm and golden California land.

Sun Men Our brothers follow on the trail we blaze;
Where howled the wolf and ached the naked plain
Spring bounteous harvests at our brothers' hands;
In place of war's alarums, peaceful days;
Above the warrior's grave the golden grain
Turns deserts grim and stark to laughing lands.

(The hillside begins to darken.)

Red Cloud *(Faintly.)*

The darkness is upon me. You are acorn-
planters. You are my brothers. The darkness
is upon me and I pass.

Sun Men (*As total darkness descends.*) Our brothers
follow on the trail we blaze;
 Where howled the wolf and ached the naked plain
 Spring bounteous harvests at our brothers' hands;
In place of war's alarums, peaceful days;
 Above the warrior's grave the golden grain
 Turns deserts grim and stark to laughing lands.

EPILOGUE

Red Cloud Good tidings! Good tidings
To the sons of men!
Good tidings! Good tidings!
War is dead!

*(Light begins to suffuse the hillside, revealing
Red Cloud far up the hillside in a
commanding position on an out-jut of
rock.)* Lo, the New Day dawns,
The day of brotherhood,
The day when all men
Shall be kind to all men,
And all men shall be sowers of life.

(From every side a burst of voices.) Hail to Red Cloud!
The Acorn-Planter!
The Life-Maker!
Hail! All hail!
The New Day dawns,
The day of brotherhood,
The day of man.

(A band of Warriors appears on hillside.) Warriors
Hail, Red Cloud!
Mightier than all fighting men!
The slayer of War!
We are not sad.
Our eyes were blinded.
We did not know one acorn planted
Was mightier than an hundred fighting men.
We are not sad.
Our red work was when
The world was young and wild.
The world has grown wise.
No man slays his brother.
Our work is done.
In the light of the new day are we glad.

*(A band of Pioneers and Sea Explorers
appears.)*

Pioneers and Explorers
Hail, Red Cloud!
The first planter!
The Acorn-Planter!
We sang that War would die,
The anarchy of our wild and wayward past.
We sang our brothers would come after,
Turning desert into garden,
Sowing friendship, and not hatred,
Planting seeds instead of dead men,
Growing men to manhood in the sun.

*(A band of Husbandmen appear, bearing
fruit and sheaves of grain and corn.)*

Husbandmen Hail, Red Cloud!
The first planter!
The Acorn-Planter!
The harvests no more are red, but golden,
We are thy children.
We plant for increase,
Increase of wheat and corn,
Of fruit and flower,
Of sheep and kine,
Of love and lovers;
Rich are our harvests
And many are our lovers.

Red Cloud Death is a stench in the nostrils,
Life is beauty and joy.
The planters are ever brothers.
Never are the warriors brothers;
Their ways are set apart,
Their hands raised each against each.
The planters' ways are the one way.
Ever they plant for life,
For life more abundant,
For beauty of head and hand,
For the voices of children playing,
And the laughter of maids in the twilight
And the lover's song in the gloom.

All Voices Hail, Red Cloud!
The first planter!
The Acorn-Planter!
The maker of life!
Hail! All hail!
The New Day dawns,

The day of brotherhood,
The day of man!

THE END

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