

# **The Acorn–Planter**

Jack London

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# The Acorn-Planter

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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

## 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 wite–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.*

{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.

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{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

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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 aforesaid, 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,



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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,

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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}

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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 Kittle 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.)

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*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}

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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.*

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(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.

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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



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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!

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(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}

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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}

## The Acorn–Planter

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,

## The Acorn–Planter

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}

## The Acorn–Planter

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 Cunies not to resist. War Chief captures and holds Sun Man, and Sea Cunies 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*

## The Acorn–Planter

*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



## The Acorn–Planter

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.)

## The Acorn–Planter

*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 Cunies 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)

## The Acorn–Planter

*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,

## The Acorn–Planter

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!*

## The Acorn-Planter

*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.

The Acorn–Planter

{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*

## The Acorn–Planter

*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 Acorn–Planter

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

## The Acorn–Planter

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,

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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}

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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

## The Acorn-Planter

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}

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.

## The Acorn–Planter

{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 anarch of our wild and wayward past.  
We sang our brothers would come after,*

## The Acorn-Planter

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