

THE ISLE OF THE DEAD.



"AND ISLES ARE SEEN AMID THE RIVER WIDE."

Where proud Columbia's lordly, sullen tide
 Seethes and toils, between its rock-ribbed
 shores,
 And isles are seen amid the river wide,
 That hold the graves of warriors gone before,
 There, near those lonely islands of the dead,
 Upon the black, basaltic, wind-swept shore,
 For unknown years, his name and deeds unread,
 The Wisham lived and learned wat-tee-tash*
 lore.

No ancient bard had writ, nor muse had sung
 His legends weird, nor his traditions traced,
 But when his boat was pulled ashore, his bow
 unstrung,

And round the fire, his children crouched in
 place,
 Then he, with meaning gesture, would relate
 The wondrous stories that his fathers told,

* Pertaining to the ancient world, or ancient times.

About a far off island, strange and great,
 Which all the dead of earth immortal holds.
 And there they dance and sing and feast all
 night,
 In splendors that no mortal soul can know,
 And then, with dawn of morning's glimmering
 light,
 To torpid death and nothingness they go;
 All silent and insensate, thus they sleep,
 In graves, with dank and mouldering bones,
 And when night's shadows o'er the island creep,
 They spring to life again, those sleeping ones.
 He told them how that spirits roam the earth,
 And round the Indian graveyard lingering
 stay,
 Or children, demon-like, they watch from birth,
 Intent to snatch their little souls away,
 And swiftly bear them to the other shore,
 And leave the friends to mourn away their
 souls,