

However, on this June afternoon, with the sun sending down a subdued, amber light through the veil of green leaves, changing the cover of dingy skins into richest amber, drawing up the smoke from the smoldering fire into an ethereal coil of palest blue, and bringing out in a sudden glory of color the scarlet shawl which the squaw had hung up to dry on one of the poles: it was a picture to delight an artist's eye. Perhaps, however, the artist would have found little to attract him in the squaw herself, a fat, greasy creature, slouching over her moccasin-sewing, or in the brawny "brave," her husband, snoring on a pile of skins in the corner.

It would have been pleasanter to have contemplated the children of this uninteresting pair, a boy of fourteen years, and a girl somewhat younger. The former wore a suit of tattered buckskin, while his sister was clad in a gay, pink calico gown, and braided in with her raven hair, was a profusion of azure-hued feathers. Blue Feather, for that was her name, was not lacking in the vanity of her sex and race. But as good may sometimes come from evil, so often vanity may be merely the beginning of a strife after better things, and as Blue Feather sat there, alternately sewing on a moccasin and casting glances at her gay image reflected in the river flowing near, there were many thoughts struggling in her untutored mind.

"Long-Bow," she said at last to her brother who was gravely pluming some arrows, "Long-Bow, do you ever wish that you were like the pale faces?"

A scowl overspread the young Indian's face. "That I may lie and cheat?" he asked bitterly. "O, no! But there are good pale-faces. The missionary and his wife. She it was who gave me this dress, and she told me if I would come to her school she would teach me to read books 'talking leaves.' And she said you might come, too."

"The white squaw need not think that I am a fool!" with sudden dignity. "I can fish, hunt, ride like the wind, and who can make better bows than I do?"

"I know, brother, that these things are very fine. It would soon be easy for you to be as clever as the pale-faces. Certainly they are better off than we Indians, build great houses into which the rain never drips, not the cold creeps; and they have always so much to eat!"

There was a thoughtful look on the young Indian's face as he answered, "Well, to tell the truth, sister, I've sometimes hungered to know more than I do. When I look at that"

pointing with a disdainful gesture toward the prone figure of his drunken father asleep in the tepee: "I feel ashamed that I belong to a degraded and ignorant race. But, then, when I see the pale-face drunk, too, and

lying, cheating and false, then I say there is no good any where, and the great Spirit has hidden his face from us all. No, little sister, I cannot promise that I will go to the mission school—at least not yet."

Early on the following day, Long-Bow walked over to town to sell his bows and arrows, and there chanced to meet young Gilbert Ray, son of the missionary. Gilbert had long wanted a bow of genuine Indian make, and taking up one, he asked the price. Long-Bow gravely marked off the joints of his fore finger.

The white lad knew enough of Indian signs to understand him. "Twenty-five—fifty seventy-five—one dollar," he said, calculating a quarter for every joint.

Long-bow nodded a solemn assent.

Bidding him wait there until he returned young Ray rushed home and into his father's study, where the latter sat busily writing. "Father," he breathlessly exclaimed, "you promised me a dollar for planting potatoes, and may I have it now?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Ray absent-mindedly, for he was deep in his sermon. "My purse is in my coat which is hanging up there on the wall."

An hour later, when the good missionary emerged from his meditative mood, he was somewhat aghast at examining his purse.

"Gilbert," he called to his son, who was out in the yard practicing with his new bow, "Gilbert, did you take a dollar bill or a silver dollar from my purse?"

"A silver dollar, sir," was the prompt answer.

"Dear me! That was a bogus one! Somebody palmed it off on me a few days ago. I didn't think about it being in my purse when I told you to get the money. That young Indian will be sure to think you meant to cheat him!"

Mr. Ray was right, for that was what Long Bow did think when he found out the worthlessness of the coin. "Look here, Blue Feather," he said on his return to the tepee, you see your good friends are traitors! It was the son of the missionary who thus deceived me. He got my best bow and arrows for nothing, the vile coyote!"

Two weeks after this, Gilbert Ray and his sister Elsie, in taking a ride on their ponies, were caught in one of those severe summer storms that sweep down so suddenly on the rolling plains and Dakota. Drenched by rain pelted by hailstones, buffeted here and there and there by the shrieking wind, little wonder that delicate Elsie became frightened and tearful.

"Cheer up, sister," said Gilbert, "these storms do not last long. In the meanwhile,