

were not near you. If they were, Belle Marie would have found another friend. She is only something to amuse yourself with and—and—" here she broke down utterly, and covering her face with her hands burst into a passion of tears.

"Belle Marie! ma Belle! What do you mean? Who has told you such a thing? Why my darling, I have wondered and wondered."

At the term of endearment she drew herself up haughtily and said. "Never call me that again. That word is only meant for those whom it suits—he tells me."

"I know whom you mean, Marie; the young brave who has been your lover from childhood, and you cannot see the reason he has done so? He knows I love you." She looked up at him. "Yes! ten thousand times better than he does! But he does not know that I had resolved never to tell you; you are but a child in years compared with me, and summer and winter are the direct opposites of each other." She was looking at him wonderingly, almost incredulously—but she answered slowly. "Love me? An Indian maiden? A forest girl? Why, your people would scorn you for it."

"My people are nothing to me now. Will you marry me, ma Belle? See! the tide is almost at your feet, come with me and give me your answer as we walk on."

With a bound she sprang up the rock and was standing at its summit almost before he realized she had heard him, and when he too reached the top, he could see her fleeing like a deer away across the open, but the days went on into weeks before he saw her again.

One morning he was sitting at his tent door basking in the September sunshine, thinking dreamily of "La Belle," when he heard a rustling among the trees, and a moment after she stood before him, looking straight into his eyes, her own containing a plain answer to the question he had asked her so long before. As if that question had been asked but a moment previous she said:—

"Yes! I will be your wife; if you are sure, perfectly sure that you love me, and me only." Not a word of explanation