

Great preparations were being made next morning for the hunter guests, the friendly tribe of Blackfeet; every squaw of the Yellowquill was joyous with the thought of revelry. The older ones busy at the fires cooking the food that the braves had brought back from their early morning hunt, the younger ones coloring the quills of the porcupine and stringing them on sinews, gathering the feathers of birds which they also dipped in the colors and sewed, with pointed quills on to their dried skin dresses.

Only the maiden Wawanesa took no interest in the preparations, but wandered away by the banks of the river and plucked the feathery golden-rod and gathered the bright tinted leaves, which she wound into a garland and placed as a crown on her head. Then, thinking that she might help her sisters in the grand preparations, she sat down and wove beautiful garlands of flowers and leaves and grasses to place on the heads of the guests at the great feast after sunset, and when finished, carried them to the tepees and gave them to the women.

"Wawanesa has made the garlands," the maidens whispered, "beautiful garlands of leaves and of grasses and flowers—all for our friends the Blackfeet,—never before has she done so much for any visiting nation."

And then she wandered away, and sat beside the river, but thought no more of the Blackfeet, but softly cooed to the silent birds that hovered around her.

"Come sing me a song; a song of gladness, my feathered companions. Lately your songs have been sad and my heart has wearied within me, now sing me a song of gladness that this gloom may be chased away, and I may be bright like my sisters, and

love to be with them instead of wandering off alone to join only you in your revels. Make me as others, my namesakes, and keep me not thus silent."

But the birds only moved their wings, chirped a few notes and rested. Then, as with one accord, they broke into a song that seemed like the wail of death, of something dying and going.

"Sing not thus," cried the maiden, "you make me more sad, more wretched. Look at the sinking sun in its beautiful bed of colors. See, it only sets to rise again brighter and brighter, but your sad notes sound as though it were going forever."

But not another note was sounded, and the tears dropped slowly from the eyes of Wawanesa, as she watched the sun sink behind the towering hills that hid the broad prairies from view. Long ago it seemed she had heard the sounds of greetings come from the distant tepees, but still she sat idly beside the water, wishing, longing for something—she knew not what; and even the birds had failed her, they no longer made her joyful, but even in her presence had cooed themselves to sleep, and there she sat, waiting, waiting—and her heart was sad within her.

Footsteps approached, but she did not hear them; her heart was too sad in itself to think of others, or to hear the sounds that it did not re-echo. But a hand is placed on her head, gently, as if in reverence, and through and through her whole being a feeling of trembling pleasure surges, a tender, exquisite feeling that takes her out of herself and makes her forget her sadness. A smile of pleasing wonder parts her lips in gladness, yet silent she sits as though afraid to stir for fear the touch will leave her and the exquisite feeling vanish.

"Gentle Wawanesa, thus I have found you."