

"Do you know the call," asked Winunla, in Cree, "the everlasting song that sobs in the Maples along the river—the watchword of the Qu'Appelle?"

The little missionary repeated under her breath:

"Oh come ye into the valley of the Qu'Appelle;

Oh sweetheart come

Where the white buffalo leads the herds

To the sky-colored water;

And the beaver builds in the meadows of the setting sun;

Oh come ye into the valley of the Qu'Appelle;

Oh sweetheart come!"

"That is it," said Winunla, with approval shining from every line of her face. "Listen! It was long ago that that song originated. Then the men were fierce and warlike and the women were gentle and very beautiful. There was one maiden more gentle and beautiful than all the rest. 'Morning Mist,' our people called her, because she resembled, in her delicate grace and frail beauty, the soft white clouds of mist that rise from the river at day-break, and circle about the tops of the rim of hills which circle the valley with sunshiny bright and warm upon them. She had been wooed by a warrior man, as strong and fearless as she was gentle and lovely, and she had promised him that, when another moon had dawned, she would go away with him and share his wigwam and his love. And never lovers loved so well as they; never was such a happy pair.

"But one sad sunless day, the tum-tums pealed out across the valley, summoning the warriors to battle. Tenderly the lover of Morning Mist bade her farewell; bravely he laughed at her fears and assured her that he would soon return; then oh how happy they would be, in the little wigwam upon the hillside! After that, the maiden wandered up and down, before her father's house from morn till sunset, watching for her lover. But he came not."

Winunla's voice ceased for a moment. She gazed straight ahead of her, then turning—"Miss Cuthbert," she said, "you have heard the voice of the trees along the river in weeping?"

The missionary nodded.

"It is the voice of the Indian maiden sobbing through the centuries," she cried, with a cadence of grief in her voice. "Hours, nights, days, she wandered up and down, broken with agony of spirit. At last, worn out with grief, she threw herself into the stream; and now her spirit ever calls—calls—for her lost brave."

"And so the valley was named Qu'Appelle—who calls?" said Billy softly.

"The Men of Magic say," continued Winunla, "that after her death the Gootchoo-Minato, to avenge her, gave her the power to separate the hearts of men and women, of wife and husband, of sweetheart and lover, until such time as some brave warrior will give his life for the cause of love. Then shall her agony of heart be quenched; then shall her thirst for vengeance be appeased. She appeared unto me once, the night before my husband left."

Some whelming tide of bitter memory seemed to rush over the girl, for her voice broke, and rising hastily she entered the house.

"Miss Cuthbert," said Billy, when they were left alone, "did you know about my father?"

Miss Cuthbert nodded. She had not been in the Qu'Appelle district three days before stories of the young Englishman, who, preferring the freedom of the wilderness to the restrictions of high society, had settled there and married the fair Winunla, afterward bidding her farewell forever, and taking his little daughter with him, had set sail for his native land and had not been heard of since, had found their way to her ears.

"He was a good father," said Billy, meditatively. "We loved him, mother and I; and we loved our little Grace, too. She was so pretty, you know. Not a bit like our people, but little and fair with curly hair like my father's, and blue, blue eyes. We loved her very much. Do you suppose," he asked, as a sudden thought struck him, "that they will come back some day?"

"Perhaps—if they knew you wanted them," replied Miss Cuthbert. Rumor said that Winunla had not made her husband's domestic life happy for him.

"If I were to write to him and tell him—I will! I'll tell him we want him back!"

I'll write to him right away! But you mustn't tell mother about it, teacher, she might be mad, you know."

He drew himself slowly to his feet and hobbled painfully into the house. In the sitting room, Miss Cuthbert made him cozy on the lounge, then brought a lamp and writing material and left him alone. When she returned some time later she found him fast asleep and a sheet of paper, closely written upon in Billy's cramped hand, lying on the floor, beside him. Picking it up, she read:

"Love ever.

"Dear Father:

"Just a few lines to let you know I am in the Mission school and I come to school. I like to go to school. I am in third reader now and how are you. how your mother get along and father get along. and I am well and stay with Miss M. S. Cuthbert and how Grace get along. Tell her I am well. I wish you would

come home some day so I can see Grace. tell Grace I kiss her. and you kiss.

XXXXXXXXXX

"Billy Martin, Qu'Appelle, Sask."

Out in the garden, Winunla, her blanket wrapped closely around her, was pacing nervously back and forth. The evening breeze swayed the white hollyhocks upon their stems, the lilies gleamed pale and ghostlike in the gathering darkness; and the air was heavy with the perfume of sweet peas and hyacinths. The river traced by the fringe of maples along its banks, sent up a faint murmur in its pebbly passage. Up on the hills a coyote howled dismally and was answered after a moment by his mate in the home lair. The wail of the vast pine forest, as the great trees bent their heads before the wind, was plainly audible, hollow and heart rending—like the cry of a soul for its mate. Winunla shuddered and caught her breath. It was all in such perfect accordance with

her thoughts at the time, that she felt as though the wind and the wild animals and the river were weeping for her—giving vent to the miserable loneliness, the unutterable agony of her heart, which she could not articulate, but could only crush down, deep, deep in the recesses of her consciousness, because the world might see it else, and scoff at her for the haste with which she had chosen to be the jewel of love, and then cast it away again.

She saw, as in memory's mirror another scene than this. A tall lithe form was bending over her. A handsome, fair face, with golden curly hair and tender blue eyes was pressed against her own. Winunla could never forget his voice, so soft and low, as he told her of his love for her. She could feel, yet, the thrill of joy and pride that had passed through her, because he had singled her out from all the maidens of her tribe, and loved her best.

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