

was fulfilling the last wishes of his dying brother. I dare say Paul Müller would now tell you that he would be thankful indeed if the average of professing Christians understood and practised the precepts of their creed as faithfully as Wingenund."

"That would I in truth, my son," replied the Missionary; "nevertheless I cannot claim the honour of having been the instrument of the conversion of the Delaware youth or his brother; it was effected, under the blessing of Heaven, by the patient, zealous, and affectionate exertion of Prairie-bird."

"Nay, my dear father, you do yourself grievous wrong in so speaking," said Prairie-bird, reproachfully; "and even were it as you say, to whom do I owe everything that I know? whom have I to thank that I was not left in the dark and hapless condition of the females by whom I have so long been surrounded?"

The tears gathered in her eyes as she spoke, and she pressed affectionately to her lips the hand which her adopted father extended to her.

"Yes, my sister speaks only the truth," said Ethelston, addressing the Missionary in a voice of deep emotion; "we all feel how far beyond the power of words we are indebted to you for all that you have done for her, and we only trust that some opportunity may be afforded us of showing a deep, sincere, and permanent gratitude that we are unable to express."

Colonel Brandon, and every one of the family circle, rose as by a common impulse, and one by one confirmed, by a silent pressure of the hand, the sentiment expressed by Ethelston. The venerable man, uncovering his head, and allowing the breeze to waive to and fro his silver locks, looked for a minute upon the kindred group before him, and thus addressed them:

"Think you not, my friends, that this scene, these happy faces, and this happy home, might well reward any degree or duration of earthly toil? But toil there has been none, for the teaching and nurture of this sweet child has been from the first a labour of love; and the only pain or regret that she has ever caused me, is that which I now feel, when I recollect that I must resign her into the hands of her natural guardians, and return to my appointed task, the occasional troubles of which will not any more be sweetened by her presence, nor its vexations be soothed by her affection. Such, however, is the will of Him whom I serve, and far be it from me to repine."

"Nay," interrupted Reginald, eagerly, "you will not leave us yet. After the fatigues and trials of this summer, you will surely give yourself some repose."

"My son, I would gladly dwell awhile in this pleasant and happy abode; but I must not leave Wingenund to contend unaided against the difficulties by which his present path will be beset, the doubts and temptations which may assail him from within, and the sneers or scorn he may experience from the more proud and violent spirits of his tribe."

"There is, however, one service that you have promised to render before you take your departure from Mooshanne. Perhaps there are others here beside myself who will urge you to its faithful performance."

This bold speech threw the whole party into

momentary confusion. Prairie-bird, pretending to whisper to the Missionary, hid her blushing face upon his shoulder; the conscious eyes of Ethelston and Lucy met; while Aunt Mary bestowed upon Colonel Brandon one of those knowing smiles with which elderly ladies usually think fit to accompany matrimonial allusions.

The awkwardness was of short duration, for the mutual feelings of the parties betrothed were no secret to any present; and Reginald was not of a disposition to endure unnecessary delays, so he drew Prairie-bird with gentle force towards her brother, and still retaining her hand in his own, he said, "Ethelston, will you, as guardian of your sister, consent to my retaining this fair hand? Beware how you reply, lest I should use my influence against you in a request which you may make to my father."

Had Ethelston been ignorant of his sister's feelings, he might have read them in the expression of her blushing countenance; but being already in full possession of them, and meeting a smile of approval from Colonel Brandon, he placed his sister's hand within that of Reginald, saying, "Take her, Reginald, and be to her as a husband, true, faithful, and affectionate, as you have been to me as a friend."

It will not be supposed that Ethelston waited long for the consent of either her father or brother to his union with Lucy; and Paul Müller agreed to remain at Mooshanne one week, at the end of which time the double ceremony was to take place.

While these interesting arrangements were in progress, the noise of wheels, and the tramp of many horses, announced the approach of a large party; upon which Colonel Brandon, accompanied by the Missionary and Aunt Mary, went to see who the new comers might be, leaving the two young couples to follow at their leisure. The Colonel was not long kept in suspense as to the quality of his visitors, for before reaching the house, he heard the broad accent of David Muir's voice addressing Reginald's attendant.

"Thank ye, thank ye, Maister Parrot," for so did he pronounce the Frenchman's name; "if ye'll just haud the uncanny beast by the head, Jessie can step on the wheel an' be doon in a crack. There, I tauld ye so; it's a' right noo; and Jessie, lass, ye need na' look sae frightened, for your new gown's nae rumpled, an' Hairy will tak' the bit parcel into the house fur ye."

"Indeed, father, I am not frightened," said Jessie, settling the side curls under her bonnet upon her glowing cheek, and giving the parcel to Henry Gregson, whose hands had for the moment encircled her waist as she jumped from the wheel to the ground. Several vehicles of various descriptions followed, containing the spoils and baggage brought back from the prairies, together with Pierre, Bearskin, and all the members of the party who had accompanied Reginald and Ethelston, and who now came to offer their congratulation on the events attending their safe return; for the story of the wonderful restoration of Ethelston's sister to her family had already spread throughout the neighbourhood, receiving as it went various additions and embellishments from the lovers of the marvellous.