

kept it between her own, as if admiring its whiteness; then suddenly throwing it from her, she said, "Oh, why can't Orianna be white an' handsome, too?"

"You are handsome," answered Marian. "Only two evenings since I heard Robert Hunting say that you were far more beautiful than half the white girls."

"Who takes my name in vain?" said a musical voice, as Robert himself appeared before them, and laid his hand gently upon Orianna's glossy hair.

If Marian had any doubts of her beauty before, they were now dispelled by the rich colour which mounted to her olive cheek, and the joy which danced in her large eye. Yet 'twas not Robert's presence alone which so delighted Orianna. A ray of hope had entered her heart. "He thought her beautiful, and perhaps—perhaps—"

Ah, Orianna, think not that Robert Hunting will ever wed an Indian, for Robert is no Rolfe, and you no Pocahontas!

As if divining and giving words to her thoughts, Robert, while seating himself between the two girls, and placing an arm around each, said, playfully, "Hang it all, Orianna, why where you not white!"

"Don't, Bob," whispered Marian, who with woman's quick perception half suspected the nature of Orianna's feelings for one whose life she twice had saved.

"Don't what, my little Puritan?" asked Robert.

"Don't raise hopes which you *know* can never be realized," answered Marian.

Robert was silent for a while, and then said, "I reckon my orthodox cousin is right;" then turning to Orianna, he asked how her reading progressed.

Charlie answered for her, saying that she could read in words of one syllable as well as any one, and that she knew a great deal besides! Robert was about testing her powers of scholarship, when they were joined by George Wilder, before whom Orianna absolutely refused to open her mouth, and in a few moments she arose and left them, saying, "I shall come again to-morrow."

That night, by the wigwam fire, Narretta was listening to her daughter's account of the "white dove," as she called Marian. Suddenly a light seemed to dawn on Orianna's mind, and clasping her hands together she said, "Mother, do you remember when I was sick, many, many moons ago?"

"Yes, child," answered Narretta, and Orianna continued: "I slept a long time, I knew, but when I woke, I remember that you, or some one else, said, 'She is getting white; it will never do.'" Then I looked at my hands, and they were almost as fair as Marian's, but you washed me with some-

thing, and I was dark again. Tell me, mother, was I turning white?"

"Turning white! No child," said Narretta; "now shut up and get to bed."

Orianna obeyed, but she could not sleep, and about midnight she stole out at the door, and going to the spring, for more than half an hour she bathed her face and hands, hoping to wash off the offensive colour. But all her efforts were vain, and then on the withered leaves she knelt, and prayed to the white man's God,—the God who, Charlie had said, could do everything. "Make Orianna white, make her white," were the only words she uttered, but around her heart there gathered confidence that her prayer would be answered, and impatiently she waited for the morrow's light.

"Mother, am I white?" aroused Narretta from her slumbers, just as the first sunlight fell across the floor.

"White! No; blacker than ever," was the gruff answer, and Orianna's faith in "Charlie's God" was shaken.

CHAPTER XI.

PREPARATIONS FOR A JOURNEY.

"O'er the forest dark and lonely,

Death's broad wing is brooding now,
While each day the shadow deepens
Over Charlie's fevered brow."

Charlie's health, which had always been delicate; seemed much impaired by the Kentucky air but with the return of winter, there came the hacking cough and darting pain, and Orianna already foresaw the time when, with a flood of bitter tears, she would lay her darling in the grave. The meetings in the woods were given up, and if Orianna saw her pet at all, it was in his home, where she at length became a regular visitor, and where Marian daily taught her as Charlie had before done. Many were the lessons learned in the sick-room where Charlie lay, fading day by day, and many were the talks which he had with his Indian friend concerning the God whose power she questioned. But from the time when she was able herself to read in Charlie's Bible, the light of truth slowly broke over her darkened mind.

From the commencement of Charlie's illness, he looked upon death as sure, and his young heart went back to his playmate, Ella, with earnest longings, which vented themselves in pleadings that some one would go for her,—would bring her to him and let him look upon her once more ere he died. 'Twas in vain that his mother tried to convince him of the impossibility of such a thing. He would only answer, "I shall not know her in heaven, unless I see her