

not die," Simon answered, weeping and wringing his hands.

"Not unless the good God chooses to take you to His beautiful home in heaven," said d'Auban, kneeling by the side of the child. Then he talked to her in a low and soothing voice, and taught her the few great truths she could understand. Then, showing her a crucifix, he made her repeat a simple act of contrition, and baptised her in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. As the water flowed on her brow she raised her eyes no longer with a wild elfish smile, but a calm contented look. He made her a Christian that day, and on their arrival at the mission of St. Francis he took her to Father Maret, who, whilst her father's bark was repairing, placed her under Therese's care. She was christened in the church, and made her first communion before his next voyage. Therese took great pains with her charge, but she did not understand her character. The Indian's grave and earnest soul did not harmonize with the volatile, impulsive, and wayward nature of the Frenchman's child. Simonette heard Mass on Sunday, and said short prayers night and morning, but her piety was of the active order. She studied her catechism up in some tree, seated on a branch, or else swinging in one of the nets in which Indian women rock their children. She could hardly sit still during a sermon, and from sheer restlessness envied the birds as they flew past the windows. But if Father Maret had a message to send across the prairie, or if food and medicine was to be carried to the sick, she was his ready messenger—his carrier-pigeon, as he called her. Through tangled thickets and marshy lands she made her way, fording with her naked feet the tributary streams of the great river, or swimming across them if necessary; jumping over fallen trunks, and singing as she went, the bird-like creature made friends and played with every animal she met, and fed on berries and wild honey.

As she grew older, the life she led, her voyages to and from New Orleans, and above all, the acquaintances she made in that town, were very undesirable for a young girl. She learnt much of the evil of the world, was often thrown into bad company, listened to conversation and read books well adapted to taint the mind

and corrupt the heart. But as yet she had passed through these scenes and been exposed to those trials without much apparent bad result. When she returned to St. Francois du Sault, her manner was for a while bold and somewhat wild; she said foolish and reckless things. But an interview with Father Maret, a few days spent amongst good people, or a word of friendly advice from her god-father, would set her right again, and cause her to resume her good habits, to soften her voice, and sober her exuberant spirits. She had found a safeguard against contaminating influences in a feeling, the nature of which she could scarcely have defined, composed as it was of gratitude, admiration, and a love which had in it no admixture of hope and expectation of return. Sometimes these extraneous helps are permitted to do their work and to assist human weakness to keep its footing amidst life's shoals and quicksands—themselves at best but sands! But if a grain of sand has ever stood between us and sin it is not to be despised: nor will He despise it who caused the gourd to grow over the prophet's head, and to wither away when its mission was fulfilled.

"Where is Simonette?" inquired d'Auban, after the first words of civility had passed between him and the bargeman.

"She was here a minute ago," answered Simon with a grin, "but that is rather a reason she should not be here now. The girl is never in the same place for two minutes together."

"What! have not advancing years at all tamed her?" said d'Auban, laughing. "Is she quite the same light-hearted creature who enlivened for me the horrors of my first acquaintance with your barges, Maitre Simon? Well, I am glad of it. In the midst of mournful-looking Indians and careworn settlers, it is pleasant to have a laughing fairy like your daughter to remind us that there still exists such a thing as mirth. But I wish she was here. I have something to propose to her. However, I may as well, perhaps, broach the subject to you."

"Is it something profitable?" asked Maitre Simon, thrusting his hands in his pockets.

"It is a situation with a lady. You will admit that such an offer is not often met with in this country."

"What sort of a situation?"