

curity against disaffection. It is extraordinary that the Government does not feel this, and that, intent as it is on rallying to itself the native Indians, it does so little to forward their conversion as to multiply missions. The fault does not rest with the Government in France; and M. Perrier would willingly assist the missionaries, but the Company is indifferent to all but material interests."

"Why has it been so difficult," d'Auban asked, "to evangelize the Naches, the most civilized, perhaps, of all these nations?"

"They have a far more organized system of religion than any other tribe, and it is identified with their habits of life and form of government. When this is the case, it is always more difficult to obtain a hearing.

"Do they not worship the sun like the ancient Persians?"

"Yes, and their chief is called the Great Sun of the Naches. All his relatives are also suns, women as well as men. But he is himself the chief representative of the glorious luminary they adore. Their temples have some architectural pretensions, and their ceremonies are more plausible than the gross superstitions of the northern tribes. Our converts here are certainly wonderfully good. I do not suppose that you could find in any town or village of Europe, in proportion to the number of inhabitants, so many pious, practical Christians as in this Indian settlement. I regret to say that, for the first time since I came here, I shall be obliged to leave my flock for a while. I must go to New Orleans to confer with my superiors. The father provincial expects me this month. I hope to bring back many treasures for our Mission; amongst them, a detachment of Ursuline nuns. They are doing wonders in New Orleans. What do you say to a log built convent, Madame? We must fix upon a suitable position. There are several Indian girls preparing to join them."

"How happy Therese will be to see the black-robe women she so often talks of! But what will become of the Mission during your absence, reverend Father, not to speak of ourselves?"

"The hunting season is at hand, and our people will soon disperse. Other years I have followed them into the forests, and assembled them on Sundays and festivals."

"Ah! how I enjoyed that time last year," exclaimed Madame d'Auban. "Those encampments around the huge pine-wood fires in the midst of such beautiful scenery; the grand leafless oaks, the pines burdened with snow, and the magnificent cascades; how they filled the air with music till the frost set in, and then how fine they were, chained spell-bound in awful silence! I shall never forget our Midnight Mass in the open air. the words 'Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis!' seemed so appropriate under that dark blue sky, studded with myriads of stars, and amongst our childlike people, as simple and good as the shepherds of Bethlehem. Shall we have no Mass at Christmas, reverend Father? Shall we be for weeks, nay, months, perhaps, without a priest?"

"Father Poisson, from St. Louis, has promised to visit you during my absence. You must both do what you can for our poor people, especially the sick, teaching them to supply, by fervent acts of contribution, for the loss of sacraments. The early Christians for months, and even for years, had to endure similar privations, and so have the English Catholics in our days."

"Seasons of famine," answered Madame d'Auban, "teach us the blessings of abundance. Henri, do you hear any thing?" she asked, observing that her husband bent forward, so as to catch a distant sound. "Is anybody coming?"

"I thought I heard the tramp of a horse's feet," he said.

They all listened, but the distant sound, if there was one, was drowned at that moment by the shouts of a troop of children, at whose head was Wilhelmina, Monsieur and Madame d'Auban's little girl. They came sweeping around the corner, and appeared in front of the veranda, where her parents and the priest were sitting.

If her mother was the queen of all hearts in the little world of St. Agathe, Wilhelmina was the heiress apparent of that sovereignty. From the day when the Indian women gathered round her cradle, gazing on the white baby that looked like a waxen image, wondering over its beauty till they almost believed that the tiny creature had blossomed like a lily in the prairie, she had been the favorite and the darling of every man, woman, and child in the Mission. She