

powder. In their eagerness to outbid each other they overdid their offers, and, I believe, our people made a good thing of it, and secured an immense supply of fowls, Indian corn, and provisions of all sorts."

"How far is it from here to the fort?" asked d'Auban, who had listened thoughtfully to these details.

"About a league. The commandant will be obliged to see you, and to have an opportunity of sending a letter by safe hands to the governor."

"Perhaps it would be as well that I should see him. Where does the pere Souel say mass when he is here?"

"When the weather is fine, in the open air; or, in the winter or rainy season, in a hut which is ill-fitted for a chapel. There are not a great many Christians here, you know. We have no regular resident missionary, and no school. There have been fewer converts amongst the Natches than amongst any other tribe, I believe, with which Europeans have had relations. They are more attached to their form of worship than the other Indians. We colonists are not an edifying set, as you well know, so that it cannot be said that religion flourishes here. Still, we like to hear Mass now and then. We have not turned quite heathens. So, *au revoir*; to-morrow in the field behind the hut, where, I believe, you are staying."

D'Auban walked back to the village. The moon was shedding her pale light on the trembling foliage of the acacias, the large tulip leaves rustled in the night breeze, and the magnolias emitted their incense-like odour.

As he approached the outskirts of the city, something white came running swiftly towards him, and, before he had time to recognize her, Mina threw herself into his arms.

"Child!" he exclaimed, with the sort of anger which anxiety gives, "What are you doing, here? Why have you left your mother?"

"We both fell asleep when you went away, but I woke up in a little while. It was dull to lie down doing nothing when the moon was shining so brightly; I thought I would steal out quite softly, without disturbing my mother, and gather in the field behind the house, some flowers to put on the altar to-morrow morning; I

have seen some vases in Pere Souel's room like those we have at home."

"You should not have left the hut alone, Mina," said her father, taking her by the hand.

"I have got these beautiful red flowers, papa, and I met some friends in that field."

"Friends! What friends?"

"Two Indian boys, papa, with dark black eyes and long hair hanging down their backs, and bright feathers round their heads, and belts embroidered with red silk about their waists. The moment they saw me, one of them came and spoke to me, in a language a little like my own, but not quite the same. Yet I understood what he said. He asked if I was his little sister who had gone some time ago to the land of the hereafter. I shook my head, and then the other boy said: 'Your sister's skin was the colour of the leaves which fall in autumn, and her eyes like the berries we gather on the guava bushes. But this is a daughter of the white man with a neck like snow and eyes of the colour of sky.' But the other answered: 'I am sure she is not a child of the white men. She is not like any child I have ever seen, and I should like to have her for my own. I think she comes from the great blue salt lake which some of our people speak of, or from some cloud in the sky.'"

"What did you say to them, Mina?" asked her father, clasping her hand tighter, with a vague sense of uneasiness.

"I told them I was an Indian child, father, and that I was born in a land a great way off, which belonged to another tribe, and that the Indians I loved were Christians. Then they told me that they were children of the sun, and one of them touched my hair, and said that a ray of sunshine had turned it into gold, and the other asked to look at my little crucifix—this one round my neck. He said something about the black-robe chief of prayer, and then spoke in a low voice to the other, who asked me my name. I said it was Wenouah, the Lily of the Prairie. They gave me these flowers, which I was not tall enough to gather myself. Will they not look beautiful on the altar, these bright red flowers?"

D'Auban smoothed and stroked her head, and hurried towards the hut. The evening was beautiful; the scenery enchanting; the air soft and balmy; but he felt ill at ease. There seemed to him a