

just as the sun broke from the sea, and congregating by scores around the summit of one tall forest-tree then in blossom, filling the air with their lustrous and sparkling beauty, at a height most tantalising for the collector, and after playing in giddy flight for about an hour, retiring as suddenly as they came.

In these excursions I was interested in marking the successive awakening of the early birds. Passing through the wooded pastures and guinea-grass fields of the upland slopes, while the stars were twinkling overhead, while as yet no indication of day appeared over the dark mountain-peak, no ruddy tinge streamed along the east; while Venus was blazing like a lamp, and shedding as much light as a young moon, as she climbed up the clear, dark heaven among her fellow-stars; — the nightjars were unusually vociferous, uttering their singular note, "witta-wittawit," with pertinacious iteration, as they careered in great numbers, flying low, as their voices clearly indicated, yet utterly indistinguishable to the sight from the darkness of the sky across which they fluted in their triangular traverses. Presently the flat-bill uttered his plaintive wail, occasionally relieved by a note somewhat less mournful. When the advancing light began to break over the black and frowning peaks, and Venus waned, the peadove from the neighbouring woods commenced her fivefold coo, hollow and moaning. Then the petchary, from the top of a tall cocoa-palm, cackled his three or four rapid notes, "or, pr, p, q;" and from a distant wooded hill, as yet shrouded in darkness, proceeded the rich, mellow, but broken song of the hopping-dick-thrush, closely resembling that of our own blackbird. Now the whole east was ruddy, and the rugged points and trees on the summit of the mountain-ridge, interrupting the flood of crimson light, produced the singularly beautiful phenomenon of a series of rose-coloured beams, diverging from the eastern quarter, and spreading, like an expanded fan, across the whole arch of heaven, each ray dilating as it advanced. The harsh screams of the clucking-hen came up from a gloomy gorge, and from the summit of the mountain were faintly heard the lengthened flute-like notes, in measured cadence, of the solitaire. Then mocking birds all around broke into song, pouring forth their rich gushes and powerful bursts of melody, with a profusion that filled the ear, and overpowered all the other varied voices, which were by this time too numerous to be separately distinguished, but which all helped to swell the morning concert of woodland music.

Cowper has selected "The Winter Walk at Noon" for one of the books of his charming "Task:"—

"Upon the southern side of the slant hills,
And where the woods fence off the northern blast,
The season smiles, resigning all its rage,
And has the warmth of May. The vault is blue,
Without a cloud, and white without a speck
The dazzling splendour of the scene below.

No noise is here, or none that hinders thought.
The redbreast warbles still, but is content
With slender notes, and more than half suppress'd
Pleased with his solitude, and sitting light
From spray to spray, where'er he rests he shakes
From many a twig the pendant drops of ice,
That tinkle in the wither'd leaves below."

But how different from such a scene is a tropical noon — a noon in Guiana, or Brazil, for example! There, too, an almost death-like quietude reigns, but it is a quietude induced by the furnace-like heat of the vertical sun, whose rays pour down with a direct fierceness, from which there is no shadow except actually beneath some thick tree, such as the mango, whose dense and dark foliage affords an absolutely impenetrable umbrella in the brightest glare. Such, too, is the smooth-barked mangabeira, a tree of vast bulk, with a wide-spreading head of dense foliage, beneath which, when the sun strikes mercilessly on every other spot, all is coolness and repose. The birds are all silent, sitting with panting beaks in the thickest foliage; no tramp or voice of beast is heard, for these are sleeping in their coverts. Ever and anon the seed-capsule of some forest-tree bursts with a report like that of a musket, and the scattered seeds are heard pattering among the leaves, and then all relapses into silence again. Great butterflies, with wings of resplendent azure, almost too dazzling to look upon, flap lazily athwart the glade, or alight on the glorious flowers. Little bright-eyed lizards, clad in panoply that glitters in the sun, creep about the parasites of the great trees, or rustle the herbage, and start at the sounds themselves have made. Hark! There is the toll of a distant bell. Two or three minutes pass,—another toll! a like interval, then another toll! Surely it is the passing bell of some convent,

announcing the departure of a soul. No such thing; it is the note of a bird. It is the campanero or bell-bird of the Amazon, a gentle little creature, much like a snow-white pigeon, with a sort of soft fleshy horn on its forehead, three inches high. This appendage is black, clothed with a few scattered white feathers, and being hollow and communicating with the palate, it can be inflated at will. The solemn clear bell-note, uttered at regular intervals by the bird, is believed to be connected with this structure. Be this as it may, the silvery sound, heard only in the depth of the forest, and scarcely over except at midday, when other voices are mute, falls upon the ear of the traveller with a thrilling and romantic effect. The jealously recluse habits of the bird have thrown an air of mystery over its economy, which heightens the interest with which it is invested.

We come back from scenes so gorgeous, to quiet, homely England. How pleasant to the set olbo, just infected with the entomological mania, is an evening hour in June devoted to "mothing!" An hour before sunset he had been seen mysteriously to leave home, carrying a cup filled with a mixture of beer and treacle. With this he had bent his steps to the edge of a wood, and with a painter's brush had bedaubed the trunks of several large trees, much to the bewilderment of the woodman and his dog. Now the sun is going down like a glowing coal behind the hill, and the youthful savant again seeks the scene of his labours, armed with insect-net, pill-boxes, and a bull's-eye lantern. He pauses in the high-hedged lane, for the bats are evidently playing a successful game here, and the tiny gray moths are fluttering in and out of the hedge by scores. Watchfully now he holds the net; there is one whose hue betokens a prize. Dash!—yes! it is in the muslin bag; and, on holding it up against the western sky, he sees he has got one of the most beautiful of the small moths,—the "butterfly emerald." Yonder is a white form dancing backward and forward with regular oscillation in the space of a yard, close over the herbage. That must be the "ghost-moth," surely!—the very same; and this is secured. Presently there comes rushing down the lane, with headlong speed, one far larger than the common set, and visible from afar by its whiteness. Prepare! Now strike! This prize, too, is won—the "swallow-tail moth," a cream coloured species, the noblest and most elegant of its tribe Britain can boast.

But now the west is fading to a ruddy brown, and the stars are twinkling overhead. He forsakes the lane, and with palpitating heart stands before one of the sugared trees. The light of his lantern is flashed full on the trunk; there are at least a dozen flutterers plying around the temptation, and two or three are comfortably settled down and sucking away. Most of them are mean-looking, gray affairs; but stay! what is this approaching, with its ten patches of rosy white on its olive wings? The lovely "peach-blossom," certainly: and now a pill-box is over it, and it is safely incarcerated. He moves cautiously to another tree. That tiny little thing, sitting so fearlessly, is the beautiful "yellow underwing," a sweet little creature, and somewhat of a rarity; this is secured. And now comes a dazzling thing, the "burnished brass," its wings gleaming with metallic resplendence in the lamp-light; but (*O infortunate puer!*) a nimble bat is before-hand with you, and snaps up the glittering prize before your eyes, dropping the brilliant wings on the ground for your especial tantalisation. Well, never mind! the bat is an entomologist, too, and he is out mothing as well as you; therefore allow him his chance. Here is the "copper underwing," that seems so unsuspecting that nothing appears easier than to box it; but, lo! just when the trap is over it, it glides slyly to one side, and leaves you in the lurch. But what is this moth of commanding size and splendid beauty, its hind wings of the most glowing crimson, like a fiery coal, bordered with black? Ha! the lovely "bride!" If you can net her, you have a beauty. A steady hand! a sure eye! Yes!—fairly bagged! And now you may contentedly go home through the dewy lanes, inhaling the perfume of the thorn and clematis, watching the twinkle of the lowly glowworms, and listening to the melody of the wakeful nightingales.

I have noticed the peculiar silence of a mountain summit by night in the tropics, and this far more absolute and striking than that alluded to by Latrobe. (Latrobe's *Alpenstock*, p. 135.) I was spending a night in a lonely house on one of the Liguanea mountains in Jamaica, and was impressed with the very peculiar stillness; such a total absence of sounds as I had never experienced before: no running water was near; there was not a breath of wind; no bird or reptile moved; no insect hummed; it was an oppressive stillness, as if the silence could be felt.

But at lower levels in tropical countries night is not characterised