

By greenwood path, and by singing rill?
There will come an eve to a longer day,
That will find thee tired—but not of play!
And thou wilt lean, as thou leapest now,
With drooping limbs and an aching brow,
And wish the shadows would faster creep,
And long to go to thy quiet sleep.

Well were it then if thine aching brow
Were as free from sin and shame as now!
Well for thee, if thy lip could tell
A tale like this, of a day spent well.
If thine open hand hath reliev'd distress—
If thy pity hath sprung to wretchedness—
If thou hast forgiven the sore offence,
And humbled thy heart with penitence—
If Nature's voices have spoken to thee
With their holy meanings eloquently—
If every creature hath won thy love,
From the creeping worm to the brooding dove.
If never a sad, low-spoken word
Hath plead with thy human heart unheard—
Then, when the night steals on as now,
It will bring relief to thine aching brow,
And, with joy and peace at the thought of rest,
Thou wilt sink to sleep on thy mother's breast.