

mouse-like, among the alder-roots, engaged in musical strife with one of his kindred in the tangles on the opposite bank ; and such was his abounding energy that no distinct interval seemed to occur between the loud, rattling songs with which he overpowered his competitor. Everywhere by the margin of the wood the robins called and sang ; while lark after lark hymned the praise of morning and of spring in the radiant sky, and then, as the last, long-sustained note, a trembling, caressing assurance of love, died away, dropped, with a flutter of glad wings, towards the meadow where his mate stood watching and listening for his return.

Frequently, I knew, I should walk the winding path between that meadow and the river when the grass was growing up towards the level of the hemlock flowers by the rill in the ditch, and hear the skylark's song again, and conjure up a pleasing picture of a little home in, perhaps, some hoof-print in the yielding soil—a home known only to myself and to the larks—where lay the treasures of the birds, the red and brown and mottled eggs from which would come the songsters of another spring.

The wren sang with delightful vigour ; nevertheless, the music of the morning lacked the volume of sound which may be heard in warm, moist April days. It was hardly more than an undertone of harmony, a promise of love's great gladness, a promise of something rich and full and spread afar, like the grass in the fields of summer. And yet, I almost think it was as grateful to my ears as are the choruses of May, when leaf-buds open on the trees, and the swallows, home from the South, dart hither and thither, skimming the surface of the broad salmon-pool and dipping lightly in the ripples of the shallow trout-reach.

To us who love the free life of the country-side, spring seems already far advanced before, with the unfolding of the leaves, it comes to our kindred in the town. Here, by the river, idling my hours away, I opened my heart to the sunshine, while, far off, my friends sat wearily at desk and table,