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FAUNA; OR, THE RED FLOWER OF LEAFY HOLLOW.*

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CHAPTER X.

A mighty forest was outspread,
 And it had gloomy shades sequestered deep,
 Where no man went.

Wherefore delay

Young traveller in such a mournful place?
 Art thou wayworn or can no longer trace the path?

KEATS' *EXDYMION*.



EMLOCK- covered knoll mentioned in a preceding chapter, was a favourite spot with Helen and her sister. Here in the summer evenings they often sat

beneath the immense mass of twisted

roots which had once supported the lofty trunk and stately canopy of a giant oak. These enormous fibres had been completely torn out of the ground by some long previous tempest, and now still closely entwined like a coil of knotted snakes, reared themselves on high, several yards in circumference, wreathed with a profusion of parasitical plants which hung their green interlacings gracefully around the fantastic contortions of the lifeless fabric. The little mound of up-turned earth underneath, was carpeted with moss and the tiny trailing pigeon-berry, while close around grew the wild rose, the scarlet berried elder, and the wood

fern with black shining stems like polished boney and light fringed leaves of a soft and delicate green. Those beautiful ferns seem to form the very ideal of a fairy bower, but those aerial beings rather love to dance their nightly revels beneath whispering old trees, whose shadows fall on green quiet dells where the moonlight plays—by the flowery margin of softly murmuring streams in which the bright stars are mirrored, or on the yellow sands of green old ocean, whose waves kiss their light foot-prints away ere the morn in the fair British Isles, and their venerable Fatherland, then amidst the pathless prairies, the dense forests, the mighty rivers of the vast American Continent. Near this, lay the pond unruffled by the slightest breeze, so deeply embosomed were its waters by the shadowing branches of the hemlocks, while the current that issued thence, when it had once crossed the broken barrier that partially confined it, tumbled wildly downward to the valley; thence it flowed more calmly, increased by various tributary springs till it was lost in the great forest sea towards which it shaped its course. Of this grand lake with its beautiful bays, points and promontories a view from the summit of the knoll had been opened by the passage of a hurricane many years before.

Here, when the excessive heat of the day was past, it was delightful to linger, while the sun was sinking behind the deep woods that surrounded the lake. Here the squirrels gambolled through the trees, their chattering calls mingling with the unceasing tap of the woodpeckers, till the coming night hushed them into silence, when the fireflies came forth to flit over the dusky water like circles of light, and the wild plaintive note of the

* Continued from page 221.