

The wind sought the frost-touched grasses at her feet, and playfully threw their heads together, making a rustling monotone not unlike music. A partridge cooed softly in the thicket near by. Beautiful leaves, decked in their holiday attire of gold, crimson and marbled tints, fluttered about her like fairy messengers of light. An audacious squirrel ran nimbly up the decayed trunk of a fallen tree at her side, and eyed her knowingly, then skipped off with his cheeks puffed out as though in silent laughter.

Strange thoughts wandered vaguely through the clouded brain, and happy dreams flitted there, not wholly unlike dreams of ours, good neighbor mine. On the evanescent walls of Fancy's castle we lightly trace grand, glorious visions that vanish if sought¹ by a simple worldly touch,—as the fairy scenes with which Jack Frost beautifies the window panes deftly elude the generous sun who smiles benignly down to gild the outlines of their magic tracery.

Jake Weston strode through the woods with every sense on the alert. He had struck the track of a deer, and was nearing a point where there were few trees and nothing but light underbrush for many rods. He stopped suddenly at sight of something away beyond, moving slowly to the southeast. Following with his eyes the direction of the moving object, he sighted upon a rising across the clearing, a noble buck. The dark object was creeping in the shadows of the heavier timber toward the beautiful animal.

Now, my good neighbor, if you and I, from the "sublime heights of our philosophy," see a rival carry off the trophy for which we are striving, we doubtless nourish our spite to vent upon the primary object of our avaricious desires; but Jake Weston was not of our kind.

All the germs of fiendishness that lay dormant in his ignorant, cruel heart, sprang into being as his quick eye noted the