

transparent clearness, now gliding along smooth and deep in their weedy course through "th' indented meads," where the roach and the dace play in sight, and the pike lies but half-hidden under the projecting bank; and now dawning and sparkling in fragmentary crystal, over a rocky bed, where the trout displays his speckled side as he leaps from pool to pool.

The willows on the river margin are gay with their pendant catkins, to whose attractions hundreds of humming bees resort, in preference to the lovely flowers which are already making the banks and slopes to smile. The homeliest of these, even the dandelions and daisies, the buttercups and celandines, are most welcome after the dreariness and death of winter.

If in this favoured land we are conscious of emotions of peculiar delight, when we see the face of nature renewing its loveliness after winter, where yet the influence of the dreary season is never so absolute as quite to quench the activities of either vegetable or animal life, and where that face may be said to put on a somewhat gradual smile ere it breaks out into full joyous laughter — much more impressive is the coming in of spring with all its charms in such a country as Canada, where the transition is abrupt, and a few days change the scene from a waste of snow to universal warmth, verdure, and beauty. I have observed, with admiration, how suddenly the brown poplar woods put on a flush of tender yellow-green from the rapidly-opening leaves; how quickly the maple trees are covered with crimson blossoms; how brilliant flowers are fast springing up through the dead leaves in the forests; how gay butterflies and beetles are playing on every bank where the snow lay a week before; and how the bushes are ringing with melody from hundreds of birds, which have been for months silent. The first song of spring comes on the heart with peculiar power, after the mute desolation of winter, and more especially when, as in the country I speak of, it suddenly bursts forth in a whole orchestra at once. The song-sparrow is the chief performer in this early concert; a very melodious little creature, though of unpretending plumage.

The summer, with all its gorgeous opulence of life, possesses charms of its own; nor is autumn destitute of an idiosyncrasy which takes strong hold of our sympathies. We cannot indeed, divest ourselves of a certain feeling of sadness, because we know that the season is in the decrepitude of age, and is verging towards death. In spring, hope is prominent; in autumn, regret: in spring we are anticipating life; in autumn, death.

Yet a forest country in autumn presents a glorious spectacle, and nowhere more magnificent than in North America, where the decaying foliage of the hardwood forests puts on in October the most splendid colours. Every part of the woods is then glowing in an endless variety of shades; brilliant crimson, purple, scarlet, lake, orange, yellow, brown, and green: if we look from some cliff or mountain-top over a breadth of forest, the rich hues are seen to spread as far as the eye can reach; the shadows of the passing clouds, playing over the vast surface, now dimming the tints, now suffering them to flash out in the full light of the sun; here and there a large group of sombre evergreens, — hemlock or spruce, — giving the shadows of the picture, and acting as a foil to the brightness; — the whole forest seems to have become a gigantic parterre of the richest flowers.

It is observable that after all this short-lived splendour has passed away, and the trees have become leafless, in Canada and the Northern States, there always occur a few days of most lovely and balmy weather, which is called the Indian summer. It is characterised by a peculiar haziness in the atmosphere, like a light smoke, by a brilliant sun, only slightly dimmed by this haze, and by a general absence of wind. It follows a short season of wintry weather, so as to be isolated in its character. One circumstance I have remarked with interest, — the resuscitation of insect life in abundance. Beautiful butterflies swarm around the leafless trees; and moths in multitudes flit among the weeds and bushes, while minuter forms hop merrily about the heaps of decaying leaves at the edges of the woods. It is a charming relaxation of the icy chains of winter.

The different divisions of the day — early morning, noon, evening, night — have each their peculiar phase of nature, each admirable. An early riser, I have always been in the habit of enjoying, with keen relish, the opening of day and the awakening of life. In my young days of natural history, when pursuing with much ardour an acquaintance with the insects of Newfoundland, I used frequently, in June and July, to rise at daybreak, and seek a wild but lovely spot a mile or two from the town. It was a small tarn or lake among the hills, known as Little Beaver Pond. Here I would arrive before the winds were up, for it is at that season

generally calm till after sunrise. The scene, with all its quiet beauty, rises up to my memory now. There is the black, calm, glassy pond sleeping below me, reflecting from its unruffled surface every tree and bush of the dark towering hills above, as in a perfect mirror. Stretching away to the east are seen other ponds, embosomed in the frowning mountains, connected with this one and with each other in that chain-fashion which is so characteristic of Newfoundland; while, further on in the same direction, between two conical peaks, the ocean is perceived reposing under the mantle of the long dark clouds of morning. There is little wood, except on the pine and fir tribe, sombre and still; a few birches grow on the hill-sides, and a wild cherry or two; but willows hang over the water, and many shrubs combine to constitute a tangled thicket redolent with perfume. Towards the margin of the lake, the ground is covered with spongy-swamp-moss, and several species of *ledum* and *katmia*, with the fragrant gale, give out aromatic odours. The low, unvarying, and somewhat mournful bleat of the snipes on the opposite hill, and the short, impatient flapping of wings as one occasionally flies across the water, seem rather to increase than to diminish the general tone of repose, which is aided, too, by yonder bittern that stands in the dark shadow of an overhanging bush as motionless as if he were carved in stone, reflected perfectly in the shallow water in which he is standing.

But presently the spell is broken; the almost oppressive silence and stillness are interrupted; the eastern clouds have been waxing more ruddy, and the sky has been bathed in golden light ever becoming more lustrous. Now the sea reflects in dazzling splendour the risen sun; nature awakes; lines of ruffling ripple run across the lake from the airs which are beginning to breathe down the gler; the solemn stillness which weighed upon the woods is dissipated; the lowing of cattle comes faintly from the distant settlements; crows fly cawing overhead; and scores of tiny throats combine, each in its measure, to make a sweet harmony, each warbling its song of unconscious praise to its beneficent Creator. Then with what delight would I haste to the lake-side, where the margin was fringed with a broad belt of the yellow water-lily, whose oval leaves floating on the surface almost concealed the water, while here and there the golden globe itself protruded. Having pulled out my insect-net from a rocky crevice in which I was accustomed to hide it, I would then stretch myself on the mossy bank and peer in between the lily leaves, under whose shadow I could with ease discover the busy inhabitants of the pool, and watch their various movements in the crystalline water.

The merry little boatflies are frisking about, backs downwards, using their oar-like hind feet as paddles; the triple tailed larvæ of dayflies creep in and out of holes in the bank, the finny appendages at their sides maintaining a constant waving motion; now and then a little water-beetle peeps out cautiously from the cresses, and scuttles across to a neighbouring weed; the unwieldy caddisworms are lazily dragging about their curiously-built houses over the sogged leaves at the bottom, watching for some unlucky gnat-grub to swim within reach of their jaws; but, lo! one of them has just fallen a victim to the formidable calliper-compasses wherewith that beetle-larva seizes his prey, and is yielding his own life-blood to the ferocious slayer. There, too, is the awkward sprawling spider-like grub of the dragonfly; he crawls to and fro on the mud, now and then shooting along by means of his curious valvular pump; he approaches an unsuspecting blood-worm, and, — oh! I remember to this day the enthusiasm with which I saw him suddenly throw out from his face that extraordinary mask that Kirby has so graphically described, and, seizing the worm with the serrated folding-doors, close the whole apparatus up again in a moment. I could not stand that: in goes the net; the clearness is destroyed; the vermin fly hither and thither; and our sprawling ill-favoured gentleman is dragged to daylight, and clapped into the pocket-phial, to be fattened at home, and reared "for the benefit of science."

Since then I have wooed fair nature in many lands, and have always found a peculiar charm in the early morning. When dwelling in the gorgeous and sunny Jamaica, it was delightful to rise long before day and ride up to a lonely mountain gorge overhung by the solemn tropical forest, and there, amidst the dewy ferns arching their feathery fronds by thousands from every rock and fallen tree, and beneath the splendid wild-pines and orchids that droop from every fork, await the first activity of some crepuscular bird or insect. There was a particular species of butterfly, remarkable for the extraordinary gem-like splendour of its decoration, and peculiarly interesting to the philosophic naturalist as being a connecting link between the true butterflies and the moths. This lovely creature, I discovered, was in the habit of appearing