

other regions of the earth, and over all the forest streamed the brilliant light. Once more the lit-up trees shone spangled o'er with rays; and happy murmurs broke upon my ear, instead of loud complaints.

"We have been wild and foolish, gracious moon!" exclaimed the tender Beech. "We doubted all the promises and hopes you shed so freely down. In pity to the terrors of the night, forgive us once again!"

"You have said right my sister," said the Oak. "That heavenly power, whom neither winds nor storms can reach, will view with tenderness our troubled lot, who live amid the tempests of the earth. She will forgive, she hath forgiven us all. Hath she not clothed us now with robes more brilliant than the summer ones we love?"

"The robes of hope and promise," wept the Poplar, as he spoke, for all his branches trembled with delight, and stars seemed dropping all around.

"I mourn my dark despair," bewailed the Elm. "I should have called the past to memory! We never are deserted in our need. The winter tempests rage, and terrible they are, but always the bright moon from time to time returns, to shed down rays of hope and promises of glory on our heads, and still we doubt and fear, and still the patient moon repeats her tale. And then the spring and summer time return, and life, and joy, and all our beautiful robes. Oh, what weak tremblers we must be!"

And so, through all the rest of that strange night, murmurs of comfort sounded through the wood, and I returned at last to the poor lonely cottage that I called my home, and wept mixed tears of sorrow and of joy. Father and mother lost, swept suddenly away, and I, with straitened means, left alone to struggle through the world! Did I not stand before my desolate hearth, like one awakened from a dream, a vision—(surely such it was!)—exclaiming in despair, as did the weeping Beech, "Naked and forlorn I stand amid the ruins of the past." But through the casement glided in on me, me also, as I stood, the blessed rays of that eternal moon—the moon that shone in Paradise—the moon that promises a Paradise restored.

And ever and anon, throughout the struggle of my life, I would return for wisdom and for hope to the old forest where I dreamt the dream. As time passed on, and winter snows came down, a cold unmeaning sleep seemed to bind up the trees—but still, at her appointed time, the moon came out, and lit up even snow with robes of light and hope. And then the spring-time burst the cruel bonds that held all nature in a stagnant state. Verdure and beauty came again; and, as I listened to the gales that breathed soft music through the trees, I thought, "If I could dream again, I should hear songs of exquisite delight." But that was not to be. Still, I could revel in the comfort of the sight, and watch the moonbeams glittering in triumphant joy through the now verdant bowers of those woods, playing in happy sport amid the shadows of the leaves.

And to me also came a spring! From me, too, passed away the winter and its chill! And now I take the children of my love, and the sweet mother who has borne them, to those woods, and ever and anon we tell long tales of Nature and her ways, and how the poor trees moan, when storms and tempests come, and how the wise Owl talks to heedless ears his deep philosophy of laws of order that must one day certainly prevail, and how the patient moon is never weary of her task of shedding rays of hope and promise on the world, and even while we speak, the children clap their hands for joy, and say they never will despair for any thing that comes, for, lo! above their heads there suddenly shines out—THE MOON THAT SHONE IN PARADISE!—*Parables from Nature.*