

A DREAM.

"I had a dream, which was not all a dream."—BYRON.

I SEEMED to be wandering with friends dear to my heart, amidst the fairest scenes of this fair and beautiful creation. I leaned with happy confidence on one whose smile was the light of hope, whose voice was more grateful than the music of gushing fountains to the weary traveller of a desert.

The gorgeous hues of sunset slowly faded from the sky, and the soft twilight of a delicious summer day gradually deepened into the sombre hues of evening. The air was redolent with balmy odors, for even the simplest flower sent up a balmy incense as it folded its silken petals in the dewy repose of night. The wild creeper wove its rich festoons along our narrow path, and the bramble hung out its snowy blossoms, and twined its delicate garlands with the slender branches of the ever-fragrant sweet-briar. The light foliage of the locust blended with the feathery sumach, the deeper green of the ash, and the glossy leaves of the lordly oak; and from out their leafy covert burst forth the vesper song of countless birds who billed their notes of love beside their brooding mates.

Our words were few,—for there is a silent communion which the heart holds with a kindred heart that language cannot express,—a sense of perfect enjoyment too full and deep for utterance. Yet, even then, a trembling fear oppressed me,—a dim foreboding of approaching change, was shadowed in my busy fancy.

We entered on another path. It was enclosed on either side by overhanging rocks, high and rugged, and overgrown with the pine and cedar, and many deciduous trees, then unfolding their young leaves in the sweet freshness of early summer. The arid peaks of the highest rocks were redeemed from barrenness by a silvery moss which spread over them its branching fibres, like a net-work of delicate coral, and every humid spot was bright with mosses soft as velvet, and of the richest hues. The graceful maiden-hair hung out its slender leaves from every broken fissure,—the pale anemone was seen clustered in sunny nooks, and the modest violet raised its soft blue eye to the light of heaven, from each shady recess, and mingled its perfumed breath with the spicy odors distilling from a thousand opening buds and dewy blossoms.

We entered a narrow path, leading by rugged steps to the summit of the rocks, our feet often arrested by tangled drapery of shrubs and creep-

ing plants; and often we paused as some new vista opened, and fresh glimpses of beauty were revealed, shifting at every turn, yet ever harmonious and complete. We sat down on a mossy seat, shadowed by a stately pine that had struck its roots into a crevice of the rock; and there the path abruptly terminated on the verge of a tremendous precipice, from which the eye looked down to such a depth, that the tallest forest trees below appeared like waving reeds. There lay the narrow valley through which we had passed to gain the ascent, and already the shades of evening had gathered thick around it, and the soft dews which rose from its verdant bosom, were charged with the rich offering of its evening perfume.

The cloudless heavens were brilliant with their starry constellations, and, resplendent above all, the evening star shone out amid the fading tints which still lingered in the western sky. A pale light glimmered on the trees which lay in shadow on the eastern horizon, and then the full-orbed moon, slowly rising, bathed them with a flood of silver light, and far down in the woodland depths, each trembling leaf, and every lowly shrub, was shimmering in the pearly lustre. The craggy rocks assumed innumerable fantastic forms as they stood out and caught the shifting light and shade, while the narrow valley still lay slumbering in repose, shadowed by protecting rocks, and canopied by o'er-arching trees.

The scene was changed. Another summer had returned, and again I wandered with the sister and the friend of my heart, among the familiar scenes of early and happy remembrance. It was once more in the fading twilight of a lovely summer day, and the verdure, bloom and fragrance of that delicious season, were scattered in profusion around us. We rested on a grassy bank, and decked ourselves with sweet, early flowers; behind us were the sheltered valley and the frowning rocks we had so often trod with free steps and hearts that knew no care, and before us sparkled a fairy lake, its crystal waters reflecting the last rosy tint of the sun's departed glory. The broad leaves of the water-lily floated on its smooth surface, and innumerable gold fishes, sporting in security, displayed their brilliant hues, as they darted through the transparent element. A few graceful trees drooped to the water's edge, and beyond were lovely fields, terminated by a range of undulating hills, which bounded the prospect, and seemed to shut out the heartless world from this little paradise of love and contentment. The song of the birds was hushed; not a leaf trembled, nor a murmur rose on the still air; star after star