

starry clusters of Forget me not, less darkly brightly blue, than if the sun had kissed their heavenly azure, but looking more lovingly with their pale tender eyes, into the bosom of their native rill. And there wanted not upon that mossy brink, the broad magnificent leaves of the downy coltsfoot, nor the plummy sprays of the tree-fern, and the glossy adder's tooth springing from the roots of that old thorn, and dipping down into that dark cool water. The hawthorn's branches were interwoven above with those of a glorious holly, and a woodbine climbing up the stem of one tree, flung across to the other, its flexile arms, knotting together the mingled foliage with its rich clusters, and elegant festoons, like a fair sister growing up under the guardianship of two beloved brothers, and by her endearing witchery drawing together in closer union their already united hearts.

Beautiful there was every season and its change!

In the year's fresh morning, in May, delicious May, or ripening June, if a light breeze but stirred in the hawthorn tops, down on the dimpling water came a shower of milky blossoms, loading the air with fragrance as they fell, and thickly scattered on the dewy moss lay the odorous tubes of the honey-suckle, flung carelessly away by the Elfín Hunters, as the last blast of their breathings wound through those small clarions, then died away with unearthly sweetness down the moon-light glade. Then came the squirrel with his mirthful antics. Then rustling through fern and brushwood stole the timid hare, half startled as she slaked her thirst at the still fountain, by the liquid reflection of her own large lustrous eyes. There was no lack of music round about, for a song thrush had her domicil hard by, and ever at night her mellow voice was heard, contending with the nightingale, in scarce unequal rivalry. And other vocalists innumerable awoke those woodland echoes. Sweetest of all, the low tremulous call of the ring dove floated at intervals through the shivering foliage, the very soul of sound and sweetness.

Beautiful there was every season and its change!

In winter the glossy green and coral clusters of the holly, flung down their rich reflections in the little pool, they visited through the leafless thorn, with a gleam of more than perfect daylight. And a redbreast which had built its nest, and reared its young amid the twisted roots of that old tree, still hovered about his summer bower, still quenched his throat at the little Brook, still sought his food on its mossy banks, and tuning his small pipe when every feathered throat but his was mute, took up the eternal hymn of gratitude, which begun with the birth-day of nature, and shall only cease with her expiring breath! True it was no unintercepted sunshine ever glittered in its shaded waters, but just above that spot, where they were gathered into that fairy fount, a small opening in the over arching foliage admitted by day a glimpse of the blue sky, and by night, the mild pale ray of a bright fixed star, which looked down into the stilly water, with such tender radiance as beam from the eyes we love best, when they rest upon us, with an earnest gaze of serious tenderness. Forever and forever when night came, the beautiful star, still gazed upon its earth-born love, still trembled, reflected in its liquid bosom, which seemed in truth, if a wander-

ing air but skimmed its surface, to stir as if with life, in responsive intercourse with its bright visitant.

Oh! faithful Star! Oh! happy little Brook! Who would not say so, who knows what it is to be the one thing cared for—thought upon—looked upon—among all the bright beautiful things of this earth? Some malicious whispers went abroad indeed, that the enamoured gaze of that radiant eye, was not always exclusively fixed on the little Brook—that it had its oblique glances for other favourites. But I take it those rumours were altogether libellous. Mere rural gossip, scandalous tittle-tattle, got up between two old grey mousing owls, who went prowling about and prying into their neighbours' concerns when they might. However that may be, though I warrant the kind creatures were too conscientious to leave the little Brook in ignorance of their candid conjectures, it did not care one fig about the matter, utterly disregarding every syllable they said, which was generous, confiding and high-spirited, and acting just as one ought to act under such circumstances, and would have been highly creditable to the little Brook, if its light mode of dismissing the subject had not been partly owing to the engrossing influence of certain new-fangled notions and desires, which in an unlucky hour, had insinuated themselves into its hitherto untroubled bosom. Alas! that elementary, as well as human natures, should be liable to mortal infirmities! But that they are, was strongly exemplified in the instance of our luckless little Brook. You must know that notwithstanding that leafy recess was to all inward appearance sequestered in the heart of a vast forest, in fact it only skirted the edge of a vast plain, in one part of which lay a fine sheet of water—a large pond—to which vast herds of kine and oxen came down to drink, morning and evening,—and wherein they might be seen standing motionless for hours together, during the sultry summer noon, when the waveless water glowing like a fiery mirror, reflected with magical effect, the huge forms of the congregated cattle, as well as those of a stately flock of milk white geese. Now it so chanced that from the quiet nook, encircled as it was by leafy walls, there opened precisely in the direction of the plain and pond, a cunning little peep-hole, which must have been perforated by the Demon of Mischief, which no eye could have spied out, save that of a lynx, or an idle person. Alas! our little Brook was idle! She had nothing in the world to do, from morning to night, and that is the root of all evil. So, though she might have found useful occupation, she spent her whole time in peeping and prying about, till one unlucky day, what should she hit upon but that identical peep-hole, through which, as through the telescope, she discovered with unspeakable amazement the great pond, all glowing with the noon-day sun, the herd of cattle, the flocks of geese so brilliantly redoubled in its broad mirror. "My Stars!" ejaculated the little Brook (little thought she at that moment of the one faithful Star) "My Stars! what can that all be? It looks something like me, only a thousand times as big. What can be shining so upon it? And what can those great creatures be? Not hares sure, though they have legs and tails, but such tails! And those other white things that