

wrath, "to be placed here, and clothed in such sweet beauty, nurtured by gentle dews and tender sunshine, and then be left at last the victims of reckless fury, with all our glories torn by force away! Would I had never risen from the ground!"

"Oh, my aspiring friend," the ill-mouthed Raven cried, "the few months' splendour does not satisfy your heart! You aim too high, methinks. Well, well! aspiring thoughts are very fine; but were I you, I would accommodate myself to facts. A short spring, a shorter summer, and then to perish. Ha! here you are again, my ancient worthy friend!"

And then another gust broke in with savage fury on the forest, and many a stalwart branch crashed down upon the ground. The wailings of afflicted nature rose amidst the storm.

"Is there no refuge from this end?" inquired the Oak. "Why have I lived at all?"

"Because destruction is the law of life," the Raven uttered, with his fiercest croak. "Where would destruction be, were there no life to be destroyed? It is a glorious law."

"No law, but only an exception," cried the Bird of Night.

And as he spoke, there streamed once more from out the clouds, that type of peace that passeth not away—the moon that shone in Paradise. Oh, what a silver mantle she let fall upon the disrobed branches of those trees! Wet they were with rain-drops, and waving in the vale, it seemed as if they shone in robes of starlight glory. What gracious promises seemed streaming down with that sweet light!

"Lift up your heads, ye forest trees, once more;" so sang the mild-eyed Bird of Night. "Fury is short-lived—love alone enduring. All that destroys is transitory, but order is everlasting. The unbridled powers of cruelty may rage—It is but for a time! And ye may darken over the blue heavens, ye vapoury masses in the sky. It matters not! Beyond the howling of that wrath, beyond the blackness of those clouds, there shines, unaltered and serene, the moon that shone in Paradise."

"Your myth again, detested Bird of Night! Here to the rescue, ancient friend!"

And louder than ever came that cruel, cruel wind.

"It matters not," once more the Owl exclaimed. "The stormy winds must cease, the clouds must pass away, and yonder sails the light that tells of harmony restored."

"Infatuated fool, to live on hope, with death around you and before you?" growled the Raven—and then a crash like thunder rent the air. The Oak had fallen to the ground. I started at the shock.

"Will the day ever come," I cried aloud, as if addressing some mysterious friend, "will the day ever come, when storms and woe shall cease? Order and peace seem meant, but death and ruin come to pass."

"Oh, miserable doubter, do you ask? Must the brute beasts and mute creation rise to give an answer to your fears? Look in the heaven above, and in the earth below, and in the water deep beneath the earth. One law is given—the law of order, harmony, and joy."

"Alas, how often broken!" I exclaimed.

"Ay, but disturbance is no law, and therefore cannot last. Disorder, death, destruction: by their own nature they are transitory—rebellious powers that struggle for a time, and frustrate here and there the gracious purposes ordained. But they exist not of themselves; have neither law nor being in themselves; exist but as disturbers of a scheme whose deep foundations cannot be overthrown. Life, order, harmony, and peace: means duly fitting ends; the object universal joy. This is the law. Believe in it, and live!"

And as the voice grew silent, from the sky beamed over all the scene, the placid moon once more. The wind had lulled or passed away to