

all the day; during which time she had not seen one human habitation. Boundless woods surrounded her; and, with the lake whose margin she pursued, were silent to awfulness. Scarce a bird among the trees or on the water was seen or heard; sometimes a fawn darted from the thicket on her right to slake its thirst in the clear broad stream, and at the sight of the girl, scoured off to join its companions at a distance; but the noise the animal made tended rather to heighten, than disturb, the deep repose of the scene. The brief Canadian summer had opened here all its finest beauties, which the moisture exhaled from the lake, prevented from becoming scorched and withered. The soil, always fertile, had now cast up its rarest productions, which no hand of man had sown or planted. Long grass, of a brilliant green, covered all the wild undulations of the ground, as far as the windings of the lake and the woods permitted them to be seen. Herbage, in luxuriant variety, mingled with the grass, and exhibited the utmost freshness, its tints comprising all shades of green, with sometimes a bright brown or red. Occasionally, openings in the tangled underwood, revealed spots of fairy-like beauty, sheltered under the long overhanging branches of enormous trees, and in such spots the few coy flowers which graced the solitude, were principally gathered.

There were six majestic trees standing apart from the thicket to which they belonged, like a family growing in close union, side by side: their far-extending roots touched the water, and their combined foliage formed a dark shade upon the grass for a considerable distance round about them. They were Canadian oaks, of ancient growth, and of more than the usual size of that species.