

ley seems brimming over with peach-tinted mists. The woods are all pranked out with the sparkle and glitter of jewels, and a bird begins to sing overhead as if he were cheated into believing it is springtime again, so wondrously fresh and sweet is the world all at once.

The rain is a marvellous alchemist. It has extracted the aroma from tree and shrub and blossom, and flung it lavishly on the cool, moist air. It has taken from the firs the tang of their balsam, from the lanes the warm breath of the asters and grasses, from the blueberry hill its savour of ripening fruit, and the wind comes down from the wild places spiced and poignant with the breath of drenched and tangled fern.

A bird comes tiptoeing along the lane, with a worm in her mouth. After a shower is the blessed time for birds. It is a robin, a plump, reddish-breasted thing, that is not even afraid of us. I know her nest is near by, for I found it last week, half-built. Let us look to see if any eggs are in it. Ha, Madam Robin, this disturbs your complacency somewhat, does it? Even the worm is dropped and forgotten, and you fly to a bough above us, chirping frantically. Dear, we are not going to hurt your little home, nor yet this most wonderful egg in it, though we touch it with reverent fingers.

Think what is penned within those fragile, pale-blue walls . . . not, perhaps, "the music of the moon," but an earthlier, homelier music, compact of wholesome sweetness and the joy of living. This egg will some

day be a robin, to whistle us blithely home in the afterlights.

It is afterlight now, for the sun has set. Out in the open there is still much light of a fine, emerald-golden sort. But the wood is already wrapping itself in a dim, blue twilight and falling upon rest in bosk and dell. It will be quite dark before we reach the end of this long, wetly-fragrant lane. There goes the first firefly, or is it a pixy out with a lantern? Soon there are hundreds of them, flashing mysteriously across the dusk, under the boughs and over the ferns. There is certainly something a little supernatural about fireflies. Nobody pretends to understand them. Did anyone ever see a firefly in daylight? They are akin to the tribes of faery, survivals of the olden time, when the woods and hills swarmed with the little green folk. It is still very easy to believe in fairies when you see those goblin lanterns glimmering among the fir tassels.

The full moon has been up for some time, and now, as we come out to the clearing, she is gleaming lustreously from a cloudless sky across the valley. But between us and her stretches up a tall, tall pine, far above the undergrowth, wondrously straight and slender and branchless to its very top, where it overflows in a crest of dark boughs against the silvery splendour behind it. Beyond, the uplands and the homesteads are lying in a suave, white radiance, but here the spell of the woods is still on us, and the white magic of the moonlight behind the pine speaks the last word of the potent incantation.

