

leaf and blossom. In the thicker depths the heat is necessarily suffocating, for the wind never makes its way through the dense overhanging canopy of foliage; and after the periodical rains, so excessive is the damp, that a blue mist rises among the huge stems of the trees, and floats suspended like a mountain cloud.

The silence that prevails in the leafy wilderness during the day is like that of the grave, but at sunset all the voices of nature seem to awake together, and bird and beast join in a farewell chorus to the departing luminary. The night is not less tranquil than the day, until the appearance of the dawn again moves the whole animal life with one common impulse. Occasionally, indeed, some nocturnal prowler will create a sudden alarm, which spreads from bough to bough and tree to tree, till all the forest rings with the discordant uproar. More dreadful is the din when the storm-wind roars abroad. Then the tops of the trees sway in the scathing, rushing blast; the darkness of midnight descends upon the scene; the brooks, swollen by the rains, crash and hurtle through the resounding glades; the vivid glare of the lightning reveals the rush of terrified animals, pouring in headlong flight through the grassy avenues, and agitated with renewed panic at every successive thunder peal.

But beautiful is the forest on a summer morning, when the warm light kindles every hue of the gorgeous blossoms, and every changing, shifting shade of the luxuriant leaves. The landscape, then, is one of indescribable charm. Strange forms of vegetation everywhere meet the traveller's eye, and around and about him flutter birds of the rarest plumage, and every blade of grass teems with insect-life of the most marvellous design. If it is on the Alps, the Andes, and the Himalaya that Nature displays her majesty; if it is in the wild, white wastes of the Polar zones that she exhibits her sublimest gloom; if it is in the Tundra and the Desert that she reveals her spirit of desolation and weariness; it is here—in the virgin forest, whose recesses are still unexplored by man—that she makes manifest her abounding and amazing wealth!