

**MORNING: FROM
REVERIES OF
A BACHELOR**

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Morning: From Reveries of a Bachelor by Donald G. Mitchell

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DONALD G. MITCHELL

**MORNING: FROM
REVERIES OF
A BACHELOR**



“For a moment I held both fingers and flowers”

—Page 65

In the Morning

1907
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MORNING

FROM

REVERIES OF A BACHELOR

BY

IK. MARVEL

(DONALD G. MITCHELL)

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EMB

MORNING
WHICH IS THE PAST

SCHOOL DAYS
THE SEA
FATHER-LAND
A ROMAN GIRL
THE APENNINES
ENRICA

Morning.

It is a spring day under the oaks—the loved oaks of a once cherished home—now, alas, mine no longer!

I had sold the old farmhouse, and the groves, and the cool springs, where I had bathed my head in the heats of summer; and with the first warm days of May, they were to pass from me forever. Seventy years they had been in the possession of my mother's family; for seventy years, they had borne the same name of proprietorship; for seventy years, the Lares of our country home, often neglected, almost forgotten—yet brightened from time to time, by gleams of heart-worship, had held their place in the sweet valley of Elmgrove.

And in this changeful, bustling, American life of ours seventy years is no child's holiday. The hurry of action, and progress, may pass over it with quick step; but the foot-prints are many and deep. You surely will not wonder that it made me sad and thoughtful, to break

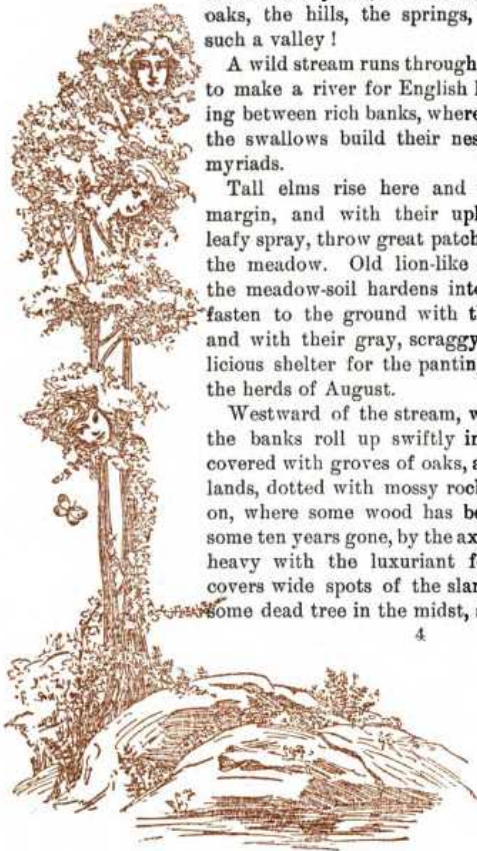
The Morning

the chain of years, that bound to my heart, the oaks, the hills, the springs, the valley—and such a valley!

A wild stream runs through it—large enough to make a river for English landscape—winding between rich banks, where in summer time, the swallows build their nests, and brood by myriads.

Tall elms rise here and there along the margin, and with their uplifted arms, and leafy spray, throw great patches of shade upon the meadow. Old lion-like oaks, too, where the meadow-soil hardens into rolling upland, fasten to the ground with their ridgy roots: and with their gray, scraggy limbs, make delicious shelter for the panting workers, or for the herds of August.

Westward of the stream, where I am lying, the banks roll up swiftly into sloping hills, covered with groves of oaks, and green pasture lands, dotted with mossy rocks. And farther on, where some wood has been swept down, some ten years gone, by the ax, the new growth, heavy with the luxuriant foliage of spring, covers wide spots of the slanting land; while some dead tree in the midst, still stretches out

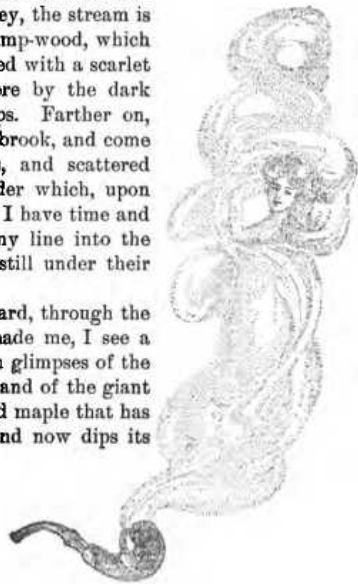


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its bare arms to the blast—a solitary mourner over the wreck of its forest brothers.

Eastward, the ridgy bank passes into wavy meadows, upon whose farther edge, you see the roofs of an old mansion, with tall chimneys and taller elm-trees shading it. Beyond, the hills rise gently, and sweep away into wood-crowned heights, that are blue with distance. At the upper end of the valley, the stream is lost to the eye, in a wide swamp-wood, which in the autumn time is covered with a scarlet sheet, blotched here and there by the dark crimson stains of the ash-tops. Farther on, the hills crowd close to the brook, and come down with granite boulders, and scattered birch-trees, and beeches—under which, upon the smoky mornings of May, I have time and again loitered, and thrown my line into the pools, which curl dark and still under their tangled roots.

Below, and looking southward, through the openings of the oaks that shade me, I see a broad stretch of meadow, with glimpses of the silver surface of the stream, and of the giant solitary elms, and of some old maple that has yielded to the spring tides, and now dips its



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lower boughs in the insidious current—and of clumps of alders, and willow tufts—above which, even now, the black-and-white coated Bob-o'-Lincoln, is wheeling his musical flight, while his quieter mate sits swaying on the top-most twigs.

A quiet road passes within a short distance of me, and crosses the brook by a rude timber bridge; beside the bridge is a broad glassy pool, shaded by old maples, and hickories, where the cattle drink each morning on their way to the hill pastures. A step or two beyond the stream, a lane branches across the meadows, to the mansion with the tall chimneys. I can just remember now, the stout, broad-shouldered old gentleman, with his white hat, his long white hair, and his white-headed cane, who built the house, and who farmed the whole valley around me. He is gone, long since; and lies in a graveyard looking upon the sea! The elms that he planted shake their weird arms over the moldering roofs; and his fruit garden shows only a battered phalanx of mossy limbs, which will scarce tempt the July marauders.

In the other direction, upon this side the

